



United Nations  
Development Programme



## Living with the Legacy -

# SALW Survey Republic of Serbia



## SACISCG

UNDP Small Arms  
Control in  
Serbia and Montenegro



*For further information contact:*

## **UNDP Serbia and Montenegro**

**Internacionalnih Brigada 69,  
11000 Beograd,  
Serbia and Montenegro**

Tel: (+381) (11) 344 44 00

Tel/Fax: (+381) (11) 344 43 00

Web: [www.undp.org.yu](http://www.undp.org.yu)

## **Saferworld**

**The Grayston Centre  
28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT  
England**

Tel: (+44) (020) 7324 46 46

Fax: (+44) (020) 7324 46 47

Web: [www.saferworld.org](http://www.saferworld.org)

### ***Republic of Serbia – SALW Survey, UNDP, 2005***

This project was researched and compiled by Zachary Taylor and Charlotte Phillips of Saferworld and Srdjan Bogosavljevic of the Belgrade-based company SMMRI, with editorial support from Henry Smith and Bernardo Mariani of Saferworld during Summer 2004. It was project managed for the UNDP Small Arms Control in Serbia and Montenegro (SACISCG) Project by Tony Monaghan. The contents of this SALW Survey were discussed with the Government of the Republic of Serbia during November 2004 – January 2005. Graphic Design and Layout by Katarina Stanković Bjegović

**ISBN: 86-7728-002-2**

**Copyright©UNDP 2005 – All rights reserved**

**Printed in Serbia and Montenegro**

---

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme or Saferworld. The designations employed in the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme or Saferworld concerning; 1) the legal status of any country, territory or area, or its authorities or armed groups; or 2) concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.

---



## Acronyms

BIA – Security and Intelligence Agency

BYU – Balkan Youth Union

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

EU – European Union

FRY – Former Republic of Yugoslavia

FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

FSO – Serbia and Montenegro Federal Statistics Office

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IDP – Internally displaced person

ICG – International Crisis Group

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

IWPR – Institute of War and Peace Reporting

MANPADS – Man-Portable Air Defence System

MFA – Serbia and Montenegro Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MIER – Serbia and Montenegro Ministry of International Economic Relations

MoD – Serbia and Montenegro Ministry of Defence

MUP – Republic of Serbia Ministry of Internal Affairs

NAMSA – NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NFP – National Focal Point

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PSC – Private Security Company

RACVIAC – Regional Arms Control and Verification Implementation Assistance Centre

RMDS/G – Regional Micro-disarmament Standards/Guidelines

SALW – Small Arms and Light Weapons

SAS – Small Arms Survey

SCG – State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (Srbija i Crna Gora)



SECI – Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative

SEESAC – South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons

SFRJ – Socialist Federal Republic of Jugoslavija

SMAF – Serbia and Montenegro Armed Forces

SMMRI – Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNPoA – United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects



## Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary .....	1
1.1	Distribution .....	1
1.2	Impact .....	1
1.3	Public perceptions .....	2
1.4	State capacity.....	2
2	Introduction .....	4
2.1	Scope .....	4
2.2	Methodology .....	4
3	Overall SALW context .....	6
3.1	Constitutional arrangement .....	6
3.2	Economic background .....	6
3.3	Transition and pace of reform .....	7
3.4	Stability and security .....	9
4	Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS).....	10
4.1	Overall distribution.....	10
4.2	Legal civilian possession .....	10
4.3	Illegal civilian possession .....	12
4.3.1	Indicators: state-generated statistics .....	13
4.3.2	Indicators: Informed estimates (non-government).....	15
4.4	Private security companies' possession .....	17
4.5	Holdings and stockpiles.....	17
4.5.1	Ministry of Interior (MUP) holdings.....	17
4.5.2	Military holdings .....	18
4.6	Production .....	20
4.7	Exports.....	23
4.8	Illicit small arms transfers .....	26
4.8.1	Commodity interdependence .....	28
5	Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS).....	29
5.1	SALW and crime .....	29
5.1.1	A case study of SALW and crime from the media .....	33
5.2	SALW and gender.....	34
5.3	SALW and youth .....	34
5.4	SALW and human security.....	35
5.5	Economic impact.....	36
6	Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS) .....	37
6.1	Perceptions of gun culture .....	37
6.2	Perceptions of human security .....	38
6.2.1	Community perceptions.....	38



6.2.2	Individual perceptions.....	40
6.3	Perceptions of SALW proliferation.....	41
6.4	Perceptions of possession and ownership.....	43
6.5	Perceptions of security providers.....	45
6.6	Perceptions of SALW control interventions .....	47
6.7	Attitudes towards production and export of arms .....	51
7	Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS).....	52
7.1	Government policy and practice .....	52
	Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks .....	53
7.2.1	Licensing of exports and imports .....	53
7.2.2	Licensing of Production .....	54
7.2.3	Customs legislation .....	54
7.2.4	Legislation on domestic trade .....	54
7.2.5	Licensing of civilian weapons.....	55
7.2.6	Licensing of private security companies (PSCs) .....	56
7.2.7	Other SALW regulatory measures .....	56
7.3	Organisational capacity .....	57
7.3.1	The SCG National Focal Point (NFP) for SALW .....	57
7.3.2	The Police Service .....	58
7.3.3	Gendarmerie.....	59
7.3.4	Border police and customs.....	59
7.3.5	Intelligence services.....	60
7.3.6	The Serbian and Montenegrin Armed Forces (SMAF).....	61
7.3.7	Inter-agency & inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination .....	61
7.3.8	Judicial capacity .....	62
7.4	Challenges to increased capacity of state infrastructure .....	63
7.5	Stockpile management.....	63
7.6	Amnesty and collection capacity .....	65
7.6.1	Destruction (SALW and ammunition).....	65
7.7	Capacity of civil society and non-governmental organisations.....	66
	Annex 1: Household Survey Sample.....	67
	Annex 2: Focus Group Sample.....	69
	Bibliography.....	70



# 1 Executive Summary

This survey represents the findings of a comprehensive assessment of the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) situation in the Republic of Serbia. It examines the distribution of SALW; the impact of SALW on individuals, communities and the state; public perceptions of SALW and security; and the capacity of the state to control proliferation and misuse.

Researched and written between August and December 2004, the report is based on interviews with government and law enforcement officials, academics, civil society representatives and international organisations; a nationwide SALW survey; focus group discussions with members of the public; and a review of data published by government, media and other independent sources.

## 1.1 Distribution

This survey estimates that there are approximately 2,898,416 SALW in Serbia<sup>1</sup>. This includes over one million firearms registered to private citizens, suggesting an estimated 40 percent of households in Serbia have at least one registered firearm. In addition to registered firearms, this survey estimates that there are more than 900,000 unlicensed firearms in Serbia.

The armed forces would not disclose to this survey figures for its SALW holdings. These are believed to be significant for reasons of Serbia's recent history of armed conflict, its previously significant production capacity and the legacy of a large army. This survey estimates that there are in the region of 677,500<sup>2</sup> SALW currently under the control of the Serbia and Montenegro Armed Forces (SMAF), amongst which some 477,514 may be surplus to operational requirements.<sup>3</sup>

This survey estimates that Ministry of Interior (MuP) personnel (which includes, amongst others, the Police, Border Police, Gendarmerie and Customs) control over 50,000 formation firearms<sup>4</sup> as well as some 9,000 as yet undestroyed firearms collected during the 2003 weapons amnesty associated with Operation Sabre.<sup>5</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War, Serbia's defence industry has experienced large reductions in production and sales. Today it continues to face challenging circumstances as it seeks to restructure through a slow process of privatisation, re-orientation of production to NATO specifications and the establishment of strategic partnerships with western companies. Such initiatives are accompanied by attempts to re-engage formerly important markets in South America, Africa and Asia. Serbia produces a wide array of SALW. With the domestic market no longer capable of sustaining the industry, production is increasingly dependent on export markets.

## 1.2 Impact

Comprehensive medical data and crime statistics were either unavailable or insufficiently complete, preventing a methodologically sound assessment of the impact of SALW on the public. Improved data collection and management is essential for understanding the dynamics of the impact of SALW and for developing appropriate responses. The available data does however enable identification and elaboration of certain trends and conclusions.

Armed robbery in Serbia is increasing as are homicides committed with firearms (although these statistics are not mirrored by increases in charges and convictions). A lack of trust in traditional security providers to address

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the rest of the document 'Serbia' refers to the Republic of Serbia.

<sup>2</sup> It was not known what number of SMAF forces are currently in the Republic of Montenegro; therefore this figure represents the overall total.

<sup>3</sup> The methodology for obtaining this figure is discussed in the Distribution section.

<sup>4</sup> 'Formation firearms' refer to the firearms in operational use.

<sup>5</sup> Operation Sabre was the name given to the State of Emergency police measures brought in to combat organised crime following the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic.



this problem has contributed to certain sections of society increasingly turning to private security companies for protection.

Although much has been done to combat organised crime, its destructive influence on the public and the state remains significant and serious. Serbia is no longer a major destination for illicit SALW although it remains a transit state for illicit goods, including firearms<sup>6</sup>. There is evidence of strong commodity interdependence between SALW and drug trafficking, and a weaker, but still significant, interdependence between human trafficking and SALW.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.3 Public perceptions

Research suggests that most people own firearms because they want to protect themselves, their properties and their families. This is a possible indication of the legacy of conflict, poor state control and a mistrust of state authorities. While there is evidence that public attitudes are changing, an enduring culture of secrecy with regards to firearm ownership remains. For example, a significant proportion of the public (34%) believe that people do not register their weapons because they do not wish to be recorded as firearms owners.

Most people do not view insecurity as the most pressing concern in Serbia, and do not feel that security levels are directly linked to SALW despite the perception that the state cannot adequately guarantee security and that there are too many guns in society. This might in part be due to more urgent perception of need in relation to other basic requirements such as economic stability, health and education. It may also be compounded by an unwillingness to address deep-rooted issues linking gun ownership with social standing and personal and family protection, and by the increased visibility of weapons in the media and computer games.<sup>8</sup> However, on the whole most citizens do not come into contact with SALW related crime, and so are not likely to be greatly concerned by the proliferation of firearms.

Weapons amnesties are viewed by more than half of the public as having a positive impact on security. However, there is doubt about the likely success of future amnesties since many people express a lack of trust in the police as the likely lead agency involved in such processes. Economic incentives are not considered an effective means of stimulating people to surrender their firearms. Significant regional variations in attitudes to amnesties were noticeable: for example in eastern Serbia there appears to be a demonstrable resistance to such programmes, perhaps in part due to a heightened distrust of traditional security providers, particularly the police.

### 1.4 State capacity

The government of Serbia has made significant progress in supporting measures to control SALW. Major achievements include, at the regulatory level, the successful passage of the Law on Trade in Arms, Military Equipment and Dual Purpose Goods, and the adoption by the State Union Assembly of the Serbia and Montenegro (SCG) Defence Strategy on 18 November 2004; and at the operational and enforcement levels, the formation of the Multi Ethnic Policing Entity in southern Serbia, and several successful weapons collection and destruction processes.

While these important steps mark positive improvements, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the SCG State Union complicates the long-term reform process.<sup>9</sup> The constitutional arrangement that underpins SCG directly affects the state's ability to control SALW because the various security instruments at the state's disposal (i.e. the police, the border police, the army) are separated between the republic and the SCG. In this situation, the need for effective coordination and communication mechanisms is paramount. Sources suggested that many of the existing mechanisms are in need of improvement.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For example, MUP report, 16/01/2004 describes the arrest of two individuals – a Bosnian and a Serb – in the village of Crna Bara where 11 shoulder held missile launchers, 53 hand grenades and 9,360 kilograms of C-4 explosives were seized on the SCG/BiH border.

<sup>7</sup> Nikolic-Ristanovic et al, 2004

<sup>8</sup> Balkan Youth Union, 2003

<sup>9</sup> For example, the Defence Strategy was stalled for months as the two republics disagreed over the future of the SMAF; as in ICG Europe Briefing 22 July 2004

<sup>10</sup> Saferworld interview with Major General John D Moore-Bick, Special Defence Advisor, SCG Ministry of Defence, 23 September 2004





The recent adoption of the Law on Trade in Arms, Military Equipment and Dual Purpose Goods significantly improves the capacity of the state to control the legitimate movement of SALW across state borders. According to government officials, licensing authorities were making decisions according to this new legislation months before its eventual passage into law in February 2005. However, the fact that licensing decisions and deliveries remain classified makes independently verifying the enforcement of the law impossible. Adopting a range of best practice measures to enhance transparency - including improved parliamentary oversight, public annual reporting and improved information exchange with other governments and regional institutions would signal substantial progress towards addressing this problem.

Law enforcement and intelligence agencies need financial resources and competent staff in order to disrupt organised criminal groups involved in SALW trafficking. While police conduct is improving, low salaries and political influence make officers susceptible to corruption, diminishing public trust in the rule of law. The draft Serbian Law on Police, if agreed and properly implemented, will address many of the conflicts and challenges still affecting the police.

The border police are in need of greater assistance in line with the steady increase in traffic and goods through the country. Support to law enforcement agencies should include resources and equipment, however this needs to be accompanied by renewed momentum to counter corruption and politicisation.

The development of an objective and enforceable system for licensing civilian possession of firearms is fundamental to reducing the impact of SALW proliferation and misuse in Serbia. It is difficult to imagine how the current process of assessing and issuing licence applications is either objective, or standardised across the country. It is unlikely that local police officials responsible for judging license applications will have the appropriate psychological training necessary to make an assessment of the mental health of an applicant.

It appears that the current criteria-based system<sup>11</sup> requires significant elaboration and standardisation; for example best practice suggests that licence applications should be judged on the basis of a range of factors including the suitability of the weapon for its intended use and capacity for safe storage as well as the mental health of the applicant and previous criminal convictions.<sup>12</sup>

Since 2001 the entire judicial process has been the subject of far-reaching reforms in an attempt to restore public trust, enhance efficiency and increase the capacity to uphold the law. Progress has been made through changes to the penal code; a new legal framework for enhancing judicial independence;<sup>13</sup> the removal of officials found in breach of their contracts; the introduction, in September 2004, of more objective criteria for the appointment of new judges; the doubling of salaries for judges engaged in organised crime related trials;<sup>14</sup> and in 2003, the establishment of the Belgrade Special Court, designed to try those accused of serious offences such as organised crime, assassination and terrorism.

It is difficult to evaluate the capacity of government to control SALW proliferation. In many areas - for example, export licensing, stockpile holdings, border seizures, service personnel numbers and medical and crime statistics - the relevant information necessary for such analysis is not available. In some instances this was due to the refusal of relevant state bodies to supply such information to researchers, and in other cases it was because the information did not exist. Trying to measure the impact of SALW on the public was equally challenging as information on firearm related injuries and deaths was only recorded for certain parts of the country.

---

<sup>11</sup> The criteria for license issuance are that applicants must be free of criminal records and mental health problems.

<sup>12</sup> For further information on regulation of civilian possession of SALW see 'Regulation of Civilian Possession of SALW', Briefing 16 Biting the Bullet, London, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Official correspondence: comments from the Ministry of Justice in response to the draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>14</sup> On 18 September 2004, Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica outlined new criteria for appointing judges. B92, accessed on 16 March 2005, [http://www.b92.net/english/news/index.php?nav\\_id=21518&dd=18&mm=02&yyyy=2003](http://www.b92.net/english/news/index.php?nav_id=21518&dd=18&mm=02&yyyy=2003).



## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Scope

This report represents the findings of a Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) survey of the Republic of Serbia, excluding the internationally administered province of Kosovo and Metohija<sup>15</sup> and the Republic of Montenegro, which together form the Serbia-Montenegro State Union (SCG). Similar surveys were undertaken in both Kosovo and Montenegro in 2003.<sup>16</sup>

In accordance with the survey protocols developed by the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small and Light Weapons (SEESAC) in co-operation with Small Arms Survey (SAS), and the SEESAC-developed Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards/Guidelines (RMDS/G) 05.80, the survey addresses SALW through four main components:

- **Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS)**, which investigates the distribution of small arms across the Republic of Serbia;
- **Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS)**, which examines the impact of SALW on the human environment, specifically by looking at armed crime and the impact on individuals, communities and the state;
- **Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS)**, which assesses the views of the public in relation to SALW in their communities;
- **Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS)**, which examines the capacity of institutions for dealing with small arms problems.

### 2.2 Methodology

The research for this survey was undertaken over a four-month period from August to December 2004. A process of consultation with the government on the findings was initiated in early December to inform the process of developing a comprehensive response to the SALW problem in the Republic of Serbia. The main information sources used are shown in the box below and the survey sampling frame and selected tables are included as annexes.

#### Box 1: Information sources used for the survey

- Serbia SALW Household Survey, a nation-wide survey of 1,641 respondents aged 18 years and over.
- Twelve focus group discussions, with a total of 96 participants, organised in Belgrade, Subotica and Vranje.
- Forty semi-structured interviews with relevant officials in four border towns (Subotica, Loznica, Pirot and Vranje).
- Forty-five key informant interviews with officials from government ministries, police and customs, as well as academics, civil society representatives and international organisations.
- Informal interviews with serving and retired armed forces and police personnel, employees of security companies, refugees, IDPs and war veterans.
- Media monitoring of articles related to SALW, appearing in Blic, Vecernje Novosti, Politika, Nin and Vreme between January 2003 and July 2004.
- Analysis of official crime, medical and economic data
- Desk review of published sources relevant to SALW control in both English and Serbian

<sup>15</sup> The internationally administered Serbian Province of Kosovo and Metohija is hereinafter referred to as Kosovo.

<sup>16</sup> Small Arms Survey (a) 'A House isn't a home without a gun': SALW Survey Republic of Montenegro, ( SEESAC, 2004); Small Arms Survey (b) Kosovo and the gun: a baseline assessment of small arms and light weapons in Kosovo (UNDP and SAS, 2004)



During the first phase of the survey the quantitative field research was undertaken: 1,641 questionnaires were completed in the household survey, and the findings were supported by twelve focus group discussions to explore further the household survey analysis and address specific areas where additional information was required. Forty semi-structured interviews were then conducted, targeting information from communities adjoining borders and from police and customs services.

Key informants were identified during the preparatory phase; they ranged from government, police and customs officials and personnel, to experts (military, police, psychologists, arms control implementers, investigative journalists) and community leaders. An interview guide was developed for the key informant interviews, that were then conducted with the aim of assessing information on state capacities and resources, official data, policy, practice, identified problems, past measures and initiatives on SALW control.

A desk review of all relevant research and writing on SALW or associated issues in both Serbian and English was ongoing throughout the survey research period. This included past smaller-scale surveys of SALW in Serbia, research on military and security reform, academic articles, reports from relevant past or ongoing projects and investigative media reports. The desk review was complimented by an analysis of media coverage of SALW and related issues from January 2003 to July 2004 and an analysis of available official data sources on crime and medical statistics.



## 3 Overall SALW context

### 3.1 Constitutional arrangement

The complex constitutional arrangement between the two republics of Serbia and Montenegro was created from the remnants of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The State Union (SCG) is the constitutional body responsible under international law for upholding its commitments. The republics of Serbia and Montenegro are responsible under the terms of the Belgrade Agreement for the implementation of SCGs international obligations as well as the development and enforcement of legislation within their territory.

Born of a need to retain stability in the region, SCG came into being following the signature and subsequent ratification of the Belgrade Agreement by the then Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica and Prime Minister of Montenegro Milo Djukanovic. Under this arrangement, the State Union has competency over the following areas for an initial period of three years, after which the agreement will be reviewed.

- Foreign affairs;
- Defence policy and control over armed forces;
- International economic relations;
- Internal economic relations; and
- Minority and human rights.

The remaining functions of government are controlled at the republic level.

### 3.2 Economic background

Yugoslavia was amongst the most advanced of the former socialist-bloc countries in terms of living standards, making Serbia's economic decline all the more painful for its citizens. The period between 1990 and 2000 was characterised by a reduction of almost 50% in gross domestic product (GDP); a substantial decline in industrial production; large reductions in exports and imports; reduction in pensions; increases in unemployment; large increases in the informal sector; and the substantial migration of skilled labour. This situation was brought about by a number of factors including the violent disintegration of the former SFRJ; the development of a war economy during the 1990s and the consequent mismanagement of the economy under the Milosevic regime; a protracted period of economic sanctions imposed on SFRJ and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) as a result; and the collateral damage to the infrastructure caused by the NATO intervention in 1999. The following macro-economic indicators highlight the decline of the economic situation in Serbia between 1990 and 2003:

Indicator	2003 compared to 1990
GDP	- 48%
Industrial Production	- 40%
Exports	- 30%
Imports	- 8%

**Table 1: Macro economic indicators<sup>17</sup>**

Clearly, economic standards in 2003 were considerably lower than 1990 levels. Estimates for future recovery suggest that it will take another six years for GDP to return to 1990 levels.<sup>18</sup> While all sectors of the economy have

<sup>17</sup> Serbia and Montenegro Federal Statistics Office (FSO). Figures provided by SMMRI.

<sup>18</sup> SMMRI analysis of economic trends.

contracted, the industrial sector has suffered disproportionately and is currently half the size it was in 1990.<sup>19</sup> Estimates of poverty meanwhile indicate that roughly 800,000 people live below the national poverty line.<sup>20</sup>

The economic horizon is not entirely bleak. While major questions remain over the viability of parts of Serbia's industry, salaries and purchasing power are increasing. For instance, the average citizen can now buy twice as much cooking oil, petrol or milk in comparison to the late 1990s.<sup>21</sup> Between 2000 and 2003 the economy grew by 18.6%. Importantly – though invisible to most citizens – Serbia has renegotiated much of its outstanding foreign debt. In total Serbia and Montenegro have between \$11-12 billion in outstanding debts to creditors including the Paris and London Clubs of lenders<sup>22</sup>, the World Bank, Russia and China. Each of these debts has either been renegotiated or is in the process of being renegotiated, with a former Ministry of Finance source quoting a 66% write-off as the target.<sup>23</sup> There has already been some success with these renegotiations including the writing off of 63% (\$1.62 billion) of Serbia and Montenegro's debt to the London Club of lenders<sup>24</sup> and 66% (\$2.97 billion) of the debt to the Paris Club of lenders.<sup>25</sup>

The public's perception of living standards is important both from a political and an economic perspective. If standards are perceived to be falling, a rise in insecurity may be expected and this has negative effects for political reform, social cohesion and economic performance. Figures indicate that over the past three years, there has been a substantial fluctuation in the levels of those sensing an improving economic situation versus those sensing a deteriorating one. The latest figures for 2004 show slightly more people feeling positive rather than negative about their economic outlook.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.3 Transition and pace of reform

Important steps have been taken since 2000 to improve Serbia's political and economic situation. In interviews with key sources, members of the government, the public and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), there was a widespread belief that improvements are visible at all levels. However, for many, the scale of these improvements seems less than convincing and many of the benefits have yet to transfer to the public, many of who remain despondent with the pace of reform.<sup>27</sup>

Crucial reforms have been made in the following areas:

**Police reform:** Key reforms such as the creation of an Inspector General's Office and efforts to return to community-based policing have already won greater trust from the general public. A draft Police Law has been prepared and, at the time of writing, was about to be put before parliament.<sup>28</sup> The OSCE and various bi-lateral donors are investing significant resources in key areas such as accountability and internal control, improving forensics and border policing and combating organised crime.

**Defence reform:** The passage of the Defence Strategy through the SCG Parliament in November 2004 marked a crucial step in the realignment of the military's long-term priorities and operational objectives. The strategy outlines the downsizing of the armed forces in terms of troop numbers and resources, the modernisation of equipment, the reorganisation of the command structure, greater civilian oversight, a redefinition of threats

---

<sup>19</sup> SMMRI analysis of industrial production data 1973 – 2004. Data provided by FSO.

<sup>20</sup> Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> SMMRI analysis of FSO data.

<sup>22</sup> The London and Paris clubs are forums for rescheduling credits extended by commercial banks (without a creditor-government guarantee). They work to help debtor's immediate burdens.

<sup>23</sup> Correspondence with Dusan Petrovic, Morgan Stanley, London, 29 November 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Simpson (a), 2004.

<sup>25</sup> This loan was arranged by the SFRJ, and is now owed by Serbia and Montenegro.

<sup>26</sup> SMMRI Monthly Opinion Poll November 2004 (unpublished).

<sup>27</sup> Saferworld interview with Prof Dr Miodrag Starcevic, Senior Adviser on IHL, and Sasha Avram, International Relations Officer, Red Cross Society of Serbia and Montenegro, Belgrade, 06 September 2004; supported by the results of 'The Social Political Barometer', Marten Board International, August 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Serbian Interior Minister Dragan Jovic, quoted in Beta Kriminal Net: available at [www.orgkriminal.org](http://www.orgkriminal.org).



to include terrorism and organised crime and a determination to participate in joint exercises and the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. Other reforms include the reduction of time served by military conscripts and the right to conscientiously object to armed service. This has been achieved despite difficult constitutional tensions.

**Economic reform:** Key economic reforms have included the privatisation of viable production assets, the reform of the social security system, the liberalisation of labour laws and the opening up of the economy to international markets. This has succeeded in drawing in a variety of investors, attracted by Serbia's low labour costs, its geographical position, its reasonable transportation network and its well-educated and skilled workforce. Foreign direct investment in 2003 was €1.1 billion, or 5.8% of GDP,<sup>29</sup> and analysts have predicted a further €600 million by the end of 2004.<sup>30</sup> The downside of the privatisation process has been the reduction in the work force with limited opportunities for retraining for those made redundant.

**International co-operation:** Serbia has publicly stated its intention to join the European Union (EU) at the earliest possible moment, and toward that end, on 21 June 2003, an Office of EU Integration was established within the Ministry of International Economic Relations (MIER). The MIER's goal is to see "Serbia, a member of the European Union, fully integrated into European and world flows of commodities, capital and people".<sup>31</sup> Such a sentiment is mirrored across other government ministries.

A number of substantial obstacles stand in the way of EU membership. Before SCG can open the formal negotiation process, it must satisfy the requirements of the EU Stabilisation and Association Process. This stipulates the creation and consolidation of a common economic space, working institutions (police, judiciary and army), co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and a harmonised customs system.<sup>32</sup> Over the last two years progress has been made in all of these areas with the exception of the creation of a common economic space.

Serbia and Montenegro participates in the following multi-lateral bodies:

Organisation	Year Readmitted / Signed
United Nations (UN)	November 2000
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	January 2001
World Bank	May 2001
Council of Europe	April 2003
Southeast European regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW	November 2001

**Table 2: SCG's participation in select international multi-lateral bodies with relation to SALW control**

The South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) was launched on 08 May 2002 in Belgrade to support the implementation of the Stability Pact and other relevant arms control commitments. SEESAC is a component of the Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferations of Small Arms and Light Weapons formulated and adopted by the Stability Pact in November 2001, with the aim of stopping the flow and availability of SALW in the region. Since its launch, SEESAC has been central to many of the reforms to policy and practice relating to SALW control across South East Europe. The fact that it is based in Belgrade indicates that it is ideally located to provide the Serbia and SCG governments with valuable technical support during the reform process.

<sup>29</sup> Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Op cit Simpson (a).

<sup>31</sup> Website of the SCG Ministry of International Economic Relations, <http://www.mier.sr.gov.yu/code/navigate.asp?Id=26>, accessed 30 November 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Nikolic-Soloman, 2004.

### 3.4 Stability and security

While more secure and stable than at any time in the last fifteen years, Serbia continues to face a number of obstacles in its transition process that, if mismanaged, have the potential to cause further instability. Important unresolved issues include:

**Kosovo's final status:** The province of Kosovo remains an internationally administered entity under the terms of UN Resolution 1244, which was signed at the conclusion of the NATO intervention in 1999. Some progress has been made in increasing political dialogue between the Serbian and the majority Albanian communities; however, real progress towards meaningful, practical dialogue remains some way off. Recent signs include the first substantive talks between Belgrade and Pristina that began in March 2004. However, the violence that took place soon after, on 17 March 2004, illustrated the vulnerability of the Serbian communities in Kosovo and the need to provide them with enhanced security. Serbs in Kosovo are almost entirely removed from the political process, demonstrated by the fact that less than one per cent of Serbs voted in the 2004 elections. At the time of writing, the newly elected Prime Minister of Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj, had been indicted by, and surrendered to, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague. It is, however, too early to assess the impact that this event will have on the future of talks between Belgrade and Pristina or on the security situation within Kosovo.

**Ethnic tensions:** There remain ethnic tensions both within and around Serbia. Southern Serbia has been the scene of substantial ethnic tension and armed violence over the past four years. However, a combination of local governance reform, multi-ethnic policing and an increased security presence appear to have reduced this threat. Tension remains though, as demonstrated by the killing of four members of the security services in an eighteen-month period between late 2003 and 2004, and a resurgence of violence remains possible.

During the first half of 2004, tensions between Serbs and Hungarians increased in Vojvodina.<sup>33</sup> While clearly a troubling development, state authorities and civic leaders appear to have managed the situation, preventing further deterioration.

**Organised crime:** Organised crime weakens states, imperils nascent democracy and threatens legitimate business. The scale of organised crime and the cost it infers on social and economic development is hard to measure, but in Serbia it is by all accounts a serious problem.<sup>34</sup> A recent survey by the Serbian Statistical Office has indicated that the grey economy accounts for approximately 9% of GDP, although when illegal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking and piracy are included, the true figure could be between 20–25%.<sup>35</sup> The power that organised criminal gangs are able to exert was most visibly illustrated by the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic in March 2003. Following this, a state of emergency was imposed and the ensuing six weeks saw a highly co-ordinated police crackdown on criminals, codenamed 'Operation Sabre'. This was the first occasion when the state appeared capable and willing to aggressively challenge the criminal elements that sought to bring down the government.



This sculpture is crafted from 22 weapons that were destroyed on 19 August 2004 by SCG Minister of Defense, Prvoslav Davinić and Francis O'Donnell on the occasion of the first anniversary of the deadly attack on the UN premises in Baghdad. The memorial sculpture itself was designed and sculptured by Miss Ana Vanoli and Mr Milos Komad, two local artists from Serbia and Montenegro. It permanently sits outside the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator in Belgrade.

<sup>33</sup> ICG, 2004; Briza and Matic, 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Hirst and Mariani, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Serbian Government website, <http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/vest.php?id=5118>, accessed 15 September 2004.





## 4 Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS)

### 4.1 Overall distribution

This survey concludes that there are something in the order of 2,898,416 firearms in Serbia of which an estimated 2,047,300 are in private hands and 851,116 in the hands of state authorities. This estimate does not include numbers held in industrial stockpiles, or the holdings of some hard-to-access state authorities such as the intelligence services. The following table explains how this figure is reached:

Holders	Quantity	Source
Registered civilian possession (excluding legal entities) 01.01.2004	1,056,314	MUP Register of Firearms
Legal entities including private security companies possession	46,986	MUP Register of Firearms
Estimated illegal civilian possession	944,000	SMMRI, key informants, household survey, desk research, MUP
Estimated Ministry of Interior (MUP) formation firearms	53,100	Key informants: number of armed personnel (35,400) x 1.5 (average number of firearms per staff member)
Estimated MUP stockpiles	9,000	MoD source: number of undestroyed firearms from 2003 amnesty <sup>36</sup>
Estimated Ministry of Defence (MoD) formation firearms (excluding former Territorial Defence)	200,000	Key Informants: number of armed personnel (65300) x 3 (average number of firearms per staff member)
Estimated MoD (former reservists)	589,016	SMMRI
<b>Estimated total number of firearms in Serbia</b>	<b>2,898,416</b>	

**Table 3: Quantity and distribution of firearms in Republic of Serbia (all categories)<sup>37</sup>**

### 4.2 Legal civilian possession

One of the enduring legacies of a citizen's right to contribute to national defence in the former SFRJ is the high level of civilian arms possession, which is likely to have been exacerbated by recent conflicts.

Official statistics from the MUP show that on 1 January 2004 there were 1,056,314 small arms in Serbia, registered to approximately 900,000 private citizens.<sup>38</sup> This figure suggests that there is one registered firearm for every seven people in Serbia.<sup>39</sup>

The MUP keeps detailed and accurate records of registered firearms, which for 2003 shows a significant increase in firearms registered as a result of a successful weapons amnesty. If this event is excluded, the latest available figures show a modest decrease in registered firearm ownership. A senior police official recently reaffirmed this, claiming the number of firearms removed from the register in 2004 was greater than in 2003, though no figures were offered.<sup>40</sup> The following table represents available figures for the two-year period:

<sup>36</sup> Official correspondence: comments of the Ministry of Defence in response to the draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>37</sup> No information or estimates were available for industrial stockpiles, some of which are under MoD control.

<sup>38</sup> MUP (b), 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Republic of Serbia Statistical Office, 2004 <http://www.statserb.sr.gov.yu/zip/esn31.pdf>. According to figures from the 2002 Census Serbia has a population of 7,498,001.

<sup>40</sup> Colonel Miodrag Ignjatovic, as quoted in VIP News, 03 February 2005.



Year	2003	2004
Requests for permits	16,859	17,000
Firearms added to the register (excluding amnesty)	13,888	11,776
Firearms sold / scrapped / surrendered	16,025	NA
Net increase / decrease	-2,137	NA

**Table 4: Net change in legal civilian firearm possession**

**Types of firearm:** Historically there have been more handguns than rifles registered in Serbia; however, this appears to be changing. In the last year that figures were available, there were twice as many licenses issued for rifles (9,121) than for handguns (3,927).

According to official MUP figures, the total number of registered weapons is broken down as follows:

Weapon	Registered number	%
Handgun	543,070	49
Rifle	449,376	40
Other <sup>41</sup>	110,854	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,103,300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5: Breakdown of registered weapons (2003)<sup>42</sup>**

Categories of ownership: In total there are 1,103,300 firearms in all categories of legal ownership as defined by the MUP. The vast majority of these (1,006,607 or 91%) are for the purpose of 'personal safety'. The remaining 9% are recorded under the following MUP designated categories: 34,906 'trophy guns', 46,986 guns for 'legal entity' security purposes and 14,801 guns licensed for 'sports' and 'hunting'. The vast majority of permits are issued for the 'possession-only' category of firearm license, while 1,557 people are permitted to carry their firearm in public. The Law on Weapons and Ammunition stipulates that civilians may not possess automatic or semi-automatic handguns;<sup>43</sup> however they may possess and carry large calibre pistols and rifles (there are 716 of these registered). Additionally, there are 2,395 automatic, military-specification rifles registered to legal entities providing security.<sup>44</sup>

Category	Number
Personal safety	1,006,607
Trophy guns	34,906
'Legal entity' security purposes	46,986
Sports and hunting	14,801
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,103,300</b>

**Table 6: Categories of gun ownership**

Of the trophy weapons, most of these date to the period before, during or just after World War II and are largely kept as objects of historical interest.<sup>45</sup> However, this does not mean they are unusable and the MUP therefore

<sup>41</sup> Includes air rifles, combined arms (arms with two or more rifled or smooth barrels of different calibre) and bows.

<sup>42</sup> Op cit MUP (b).

<sup>43</sup> Article 5, Law on Weapons and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/2003.

<sup>44</sup> Op cit MUP (b).

<sup>45</sup> Saferworld interview with Milos Vasic, Correspondent, Vreme, Belgrade, 06 September 2004.



requires them to be legally registered. Such a concern was echoed by key sources: “There are a lot of old weapons in this country and many of them are in good shape.”<sup>46</sup> According to research conducted by SMMRI, many more families than the 34,906 registered keep trophy weapons at home.<sup>47</sup>

### 4.3 Illegal civilian possession

It is not possible to accurately calculate the number of illegal firearms in Serbia due to the sensitivity of the issue and the lack of previous credible estimates. However, a wide range of primary and secondary factors have been taken into consideration, which help construct a realistic picture of illegal possession in Serbia. The following factors have been considered:



**Firearms and Ammunition recovered in South Serbia**

- Recent conflict and weakened state institutions
- Cultural attitudes towards firearms
- Demographic patterns and refugee/IDP populations
- Law enforcement practice and legal disincentives
- Trust in the state
- Practicalities of legalisation
- Supply and availability

**Recent conflict and weakened state institutions:** Serbia is still recovering from a protracted period of armed violence and conflict. Because of the perceived inability of the state to provide fundamental security it is widely assumed that gun ownership is high.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, because the previous regime armed paramilitary organisations, the long history of well-disciplined registration of weapons was interrupted. The detachment of the state from citizens in previous years indicates that illegal possession might continue to be ‘high’ compared to neighbouring states.

**Cultural attitudes towards firearms:** In devising a figure for illegal possession, conversations with key informants identified a distinction between unregistered weapons and weapons used by criminal groups. Although the law makes no such distinction, it would seem that the public, the police and possibly courts do make a distinction in the way they treat what many consider to be two separate categories of illicit ownership. To understand this properly, it is important to consider the Serbian attitude towards gun ownership (see 6.1).

Opinions in Serbia on whether a gun culture exists are evenly split. Slightly more than half the members of the public consulted by this survey believed that certain parts of Serbia do have a traditional attachment to weapons. If this is accepted, it increases the likely scale of possession within communities. Both the household survey and key informants suggested there was a high instance of weapons in certain segments of the population, particularly refugees and IDPs.

**Demographic patterns and IDP populations:** There are hundreds of thousands of refugees displaced from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo living in Serbia. Currently 460,000 are registered with the state as IDPs or refugees. According to SMMRI, refugees and IDPs are more likely to be in possession of firearms due to factors such as the earlier conflicts in those regions and the wide availability of weapons at the time,<sup>49</sup> the increased perceived need for personal protection, lack of information on how to register weapons, the financial

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> SMMRI research for ‘Public Perceptions of Small Arms and Security in Southern Serbia’, SEESAC, 2004.

<sup>48</sup> SMMRI (a), 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Saferworld interview with Srdjan Bogosavljevic, Chief Executive Officer, SMMRI, Belgrade, 21 October 2004.

value of firearms and lack of trust in the state. It is also likely that given refugees and IDPs' detachment from contact with state administration, any firearms they might possess are likely not to be licensed.

Law enforcement practice and legal disincentives: Legal penalties and police practice are relevant to understanding the total number of unregistered weapons. According to key informant sources, there is a certain tolerance amongst the police towards domestic, unregistered weapons and particularly vintage or trophy weapons.<sup>50</sup> Such perceived tolerance may well mean people resist registering their weapons, out of lack of fear of punishment.

In Serbia it is common practice for police to stop and search vehicles for weapons amongst other things. This method of small arms control would appear to deliver significant results as demonstrated by the seizures of large quantities of handguns and ammunition that are frequently reported in the media. For instance in October 2004 1,400 pieces of ammunition were seized in the vicinity of Novi Pazar, near the administrative border with Kosovo. Such incidents are repeated across the country.<sup>51</sup>

**Trust in the state:** Both the household survey and conversations with key informants revealed a problem with trust between the police and public.<sup>52</sup> Research carried out for this survey revealed that a considerable proportion of the public (34%) believe that people do not register their weapons simply because they do not wish to be recorded as firearms owners, presumably either because of a lack of trust in the local state authorities or because they do not wish to be known to the authorities. The household survey confirmed that lack of trust in the police also prevented people handing in weapons as part of the amnesty organised during the 2003 state of emergency. Aside from amnesties, another indicator of the lack of trust is that the public are often unwilling to confide in the police about criminals as "they [the police] can't or don't want to protect sources."<sup>53</sup>

**Practicalities of legalisation:** Another consideration is the relative difficulty of registering or surrendering weapons. Many key sources commented that fear of a lack of anonymity during the March 2003 amnesty reduced the number of unregistered firearm owners seeking legalisation. Furthermore, the price of registering a weapon is relatively high in Serbia<sup>54</sup> and may well deter those with financial problems from registering firearms.

**Supply and availability:** All sources agreed that purchasing a weapon illegally was easy and relatively affordable (see Table 14). Conversely, many people did not know where to buy a weapon legally.<sup>55</sup> Such a situation would seem to provide a disincentive to legal registration.

While these factors are important considerations when building an overall picture of illegal possession, they are not in themselves sufficient to form the basis for estimating the number of illegal firearms in Serbia. Instead, a number of state and non-state indicators can be considered that help generate a more detailed picture.

### 4.3.1 Indicators: state-generated statistics

In attempting to calculate the number of unregistered firearms in any given country, one valuable source are state-collected statistics of incidents involving unlicensed firearms, such as armed robberies, murders and law enforcement seizures. While such data has to be measured against the competence of law enforcement agencies and therefore cannot be used as a definitive guide to wider possession, it can be useful.

**Firearms surrendered during 2003 amnesty:** The only full statistics readily available to this survey on the distribution of illegal firearms were obtained from the MUP and covered firearms surrendered for legalisation or destruction during the March 2003 amnesty.

<sup>50</sup> Saferworld interviews with Bozo Prelevic, Executive Director, League of Experts. Belgrade, 07 October 2004.

<sup>51</sup> *Blic*, U Novom Pazaru zaplenjeno 1400 metaka', 10 October 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Op cit SMMRI (a).

<sup>53</sup> Op cit Starcevic and Avram.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Op cit Vasic.



MUP Secretariat	Number of Firearms Surrendered	Population <sup>56</sup>	Number of firearms surrendered (per hundred people)
Vojvodina	7,743	504,100	1.5
Eastern Serbia	428	121,000	0.4
Central Serbia	12,897	1,716,000	0.8
Belgrade <sup>57</sup>	4,878	1,126,000	0.4
Southern Serbia	4,141	434,000	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,087<sup>58</sup></b>	<b>3,901,100</b>	

**Table 7: Geographical distribution of surrendered arms in urban centres across Serbia during the March 2003 Amnesty (by region)<sup>59</sup>**

Making any assumptions about the geographical distribution of firearms from an analysis of the above figures is difficult and raises a number of questions, including: how much did the public trust the police? What were the ethnic relations like? What was the public's awareness of the amnesty? How effective were the police at collecting firearms? Because of these and other factors it is hard to assume, for instance, that Vojvodina has/had the highest concentration of illegal firearms of any region in Serbia.

In the household survey, when asked “How widespread are firearms among your community?”, the region where most respondents answered that ‘many’ or ‘virtually everyone’ (70%) owned at least one firearm was eastern Serbia where, according to this data, the least number of people surrendered firearms. This begs the question: are the residents of eastern Serbia least likely to surrender their firearms or do they simply not own them? This question can be partly answered by looking at the results of the question: “Do you or a member of your household own a firearm?” Here, again it was respondents in the east who most often (30%) answered that they or someone in their household owned a firearm. Respondents from the same region expressed the greatest awareness (79%) that there was an amnesty and an opportunity to surrender their weapons, although official figures indicate that very few did so. Importantly, respondents from the same region also had least confidence in the utility of amnesties (48% believed future amnesties would be unsuccessful).

**Ministry of Interior estimates:** The Initial estimate by the MUP in 2002 of illegal weapons possession was 60,000.<sup>60</sup> It is very likely that the first figure is a serious underestimate given that subsequent to this, around the same number of illicit firearms were surrendered in amnesties, collections and seizures, which would, if accurate, suggest that there are now no illicit firearms in circulation in Serbia.

Subsequent correspondence with the MUP suggested a revised estimate: “larger than 20% of the total legal number”.<sup>61</sup> This second estimate indicates the view that at the very least 220,000 illicit SALW are in circulation in Serbia.

**Other state data:** Unfortunately, incomplete or outdated information meant a more thorough analysis of state statistics was not possible. For instance, MUP law enforcement confiscation figures were available for 2002 when 8,182 firearms were taken out of circulation under Article 33 of the Weapons and Ammunition Law;<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> World Gazetteer, [www.world-gazetter.com](http://www.world-gazetter.com), accessed 27 November 2004.

<sup>57</sup> Belgrade includes Pancevo.

<sup>58</sup> In addition to the 30,087 firearms surrendered by members of the public during the amnesty period, the MoD collected a further 20,159 at their facilities across the country; Source: Official MUP data.

<sup>59</sup> Official MUP data.

<sup>60</sup> Op cit MUP (a).

<sup>61</sup> Official Correspondence: Comments of the Ministry of Interior in response to the Draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>62</sup> MUP (a) *Activity Report 2002* <http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/mup.nsf/index1-e.html>.

however the figures available for 2003 appeared to be calculated according to a separate set of criteria.<sup>63</sup> Figures on homicides committed with firearms – of which there were 86 in 2002 – were available but no distinction was made between the use of registered and unregistered firearms. Equally, statistics on injuries sustained from firearms were only available for 2002 and just for Belgrade (654), rather than nationwide, making extrapolation of these figures difficult.

Another set of statistics that were partially available were the number of suicides committed with firearms. Previous academic work into the use of guns in violent crime and suicide suggests that there is a positive correlation between suicides committed with firearms and the levels of firearm possession.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the higher the rates of suicide committed with a firearm, the higher the number of households possessing at least one firearm. Just taking registered weapons into account, Serbia has a high percentage of firearms per household (42%),<sup>65</sup> making it roughly comparable with Switzerland (36%) and the United States of America (49%), but significantly higher than countries such as the United Kingdom (less than 5%).<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, in Serbia approximately 15% of suicides are committed with firearms, a figure that is relatively low in comparison to other countries,<sup>67</sup> and particularly in comparison with the US, where 54% of suicides are firearms related.<sup>68</sup> Suicides committed with firearms therefore do not appear to be a viable indicator of levels of firearm possession in Serbia.

**Comparison with European Union states:** According to the MUP, citing information to which they have access, in European Union countries for every ten legal firearms there are on average two illegal firearms.<sup>69</sup> Given Serbia's turbulent recent history it is reasonable to consider that such a figure would be significantly higher in Serbia, an assertion supported by the MUP.<sup>70</sup>

### 4.3.2 Indicators: Informed estimates (non-government)

The final method this survey uses to derive a figure for illegal possession is to incorporate the estimates of individuals, groups and organisations with particularly informed insights on the issue of illegal civilian possession. Any one source is unlikely to be able to make an accurate estimation due to lack of access to information, and for this reason, four separate categories of informed sources have been included so as to give the most realistic figure possible.

**The general public:** In the household survey, respondents were asked if either they or a member of their household owned a firearm and were then asked how many they owned. A total of 20% answered positively, and the average number of firearms per household was 1.5. According to the 2002 Census, there are approximately 2.5 million households in Serbia;<sup>71</sup> therefore, if the survey findings are extrapolated to the wider population, 500,000 households (20% of 2.5 million households in Serbia) possess approximately 750,000 firearms.

This figure is lower than the number of officially registered firearms. This can be explained by the fact that survey questions probing sensitive issues such as firearms possession often lead respondents to answer in a way they perceive to be more socially acceptable: in this case that they do not possess weapons even if they do. Additionally, respondents interviewed might not have information on firearms possession in their household (female respondents were more likely to answer negatively to possession and give a lower figure for numbers of firearms possessed). It is also far more likely that those with registered firearms would answer such questions truthfully than those with unregistered firearms.

<sup>63</sup> MUP (d) 'Pregled osnovnih pokazatelja o stanju javne bezbednosti' 'Basic Indicators of the State of Public Security' ://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/preventi.nsf/statistikakriminalitet.

<sup>64</sup> Killias et al, 2001.

<sup>65</sup> According to the 2002 Census there are approximately 2.5 million households in Serbia (this assumes that there is only one firearm owner per household).

<sup>66</sup> Block, 1997.

<sup>67</sup> In a survey of 34 countries, undertaken for the UN International Study on Firearm Regulation in 1998, the average number of suicides committed with firearms was 19%.

<sup>68</sup> American Association of Suicidology, 2004.

<sup>69</sup> At the time of writing it had not been possible to substantiate figures given for EU countries.

<sup>70</sup> Official correspondence: comments of the Ministry of Interior in response to the draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>71</sup> Unpublished data from the 2002 Census provided by SMMRI.



Even though a large majority (85%) of respondents felt that ‘many’ or ‘virtually everyone’ in Serbian society possessed a firearm, this number was greatly reduced (52%) when the same question was asked about ‘your community’. It then falls even further (20%) when the question is asked of the particular individual. Thus, there would appear to be a tendency to avoid associating possession at the individual or community level.

Another question in the survey gives a useful insight into illegal possession. When asked to give an opinion on whether most firearms in private possession were legal or illegal, 67% of respondents thought there were at least the same number of unlicensed as licensed weapons. Given that there are 1,056,314 registered weapons, a conservative estimate for illegal weapons would be 1 million, taking into consideration that the general public are very unlikely to know the exact figure of registered weapons.

**SMMRI:** The organisation responsible for conducting much of the field research for this survey was consulted as a uniquely placed key informant based on their knowledge of, and familiarity with, the issue of SALW distribution in Serbia. This position is warranted through its knowledge derived from research for this survey and a previous SALW survey in southern Serbia, as well as its experience in accessing and processing statistical data. To build on information gathered from the household survey, the focus groups and the semi-structured interviews, SMMRI conducted a series of informal interviews with individuals from the following groups who were identified as having particularly useful insights into illegal SALW possession: serving and retired members of the armed forces and police personnel, members of security companies, refugees, IDPs and veterans and their descendents.

Based on their interpretation of the four survey components, of the previous Southern Serbia Survey and these additional informal interviews, SMMRI estimates that there are between 1 million and 1.8 million illegal firearms in Serbia. The lower band reflects the minimum public consensus, as consulted through this survey, while the higher band incorporates the perspectives of individuals consulted in the supplementary informal interviews. The average number of illegal firearms according to SMMRI estimates can therefore be said to be 1.4 million.

**Key informants:** This group of ‘well placed sources’ were consulted precisely because of the scarce availability of law enforcement and medical data. While no key informant can provide anything more than an educated guess, they are nonetheless people in particularly relevant positions. Estimates of the number of illicit civilian firearms holdings were acquired from seven of the 45 key informants interviewed for this survey. Those key informants who did not provide estimates either refused to do so or were unable to provide a figure. Estimates ranged greatly, from a low of 60,000 to a high of 1.5 million, with the remaining respondents estimating towards the higher end of this range.<sup>72</sup>

The following table illustrates the range of estimates provided to this survey:

Source	Estimate
MUP I	60,000
MUP II	220,000
Key Informant (KI) 6	60,000
Household Survey	1,000,000
KI 2	1,100,000
KI 3	1,200,000
KI 1	1,400,000
KI 4	1,500,000
KI 5	1,500,000
SMMRI	1,400,000
Mean	944,000

**Table 8: Estimates of number of illegal firearms**

<sup>72</sup> Saferworld interviews with Dr Marko Nicovic, Vice President, International Bodyguard and Security Services Association, Dr. James Lyon, Director, Serbia Project, International Crisis Group; Alexander Radic, Journalist, VIP News; Milorad Timotic, Secretary General, Centre for Civil Military Relations; Ivan Filipovic, Red Beret Special Forces, Southern Serbia and Kosovo (retd); Alexander Piperski, Regional Coordinator SALW, European Movement in Serbia.

The table demonstrates that there appears to be a high incidence of estimates in the band between 1 million and 1.5 million. If equal weighting is given to each key informant estimate, then a mean figure would represent 944,000 unregistered firearms. This figure appears realistic given Serbia's recent experience with conflict, attitudes towards firearms ownership, large-scale refugee movements, the availability of firearms and weak (though improving) trust in state institutions to guarantee safety and security. However the MUP felt strongly that higher estimates of between 1 and 1.5 million illicit SALW were inflated.<sup>73</sup>



Firearms are destroyed by furnace in Serbia 2004

## 4.4 Private security companies' possession

There were 170 private security companies (PSCs) registered in Serbia in 2004 with the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>74</sup> However, private security companies are not obliged to pay the €500 fee to register and indeed many of the larger PSCs do not appear on this list.<sup>75</sup> A more accurate picture of the number of companies and employees involved is obtainable from the MUP register of firearms that cites 46,986 firearms registered to legal entities under Article 17 of the Law on Weapons and Ammunition<sup>76</sup> (this number, however, also includes hunting associations and private investigators). Media reports offer a different assessment, indicating that there are some 3,200 companies employing "approximately 38,000 people."<sup>77</sup> This estimate appears to be corroborated by information provided by key informants.<sup>78</sup>

There is a close relationship between law enforcement agencies and the private security industry in Serbia. This is also true in many states and need not necessarily be problematic providing the industry is effectively regulated. A limited study conducted for this survey by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) found that 42% of employees working for the five largest PSCs in Serbia were previously employed by the police.<sup>79</sup> There is equally a close relationship between the police and the managers and owners of PSCs. For example, *Progard Securitas* was established by the former Deputy Chief of Belgrade Police Department in 1992<sup>80</sup>. *Program Securitas* is widely regarded as being a well-regulated firm that operates according to the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) Code of Ethics. However, this is not true of the industry as a whole. Other companies are alleged to employ serving police officers in an 'off duty' capacity, presenting clear conflicts of interests for those involved.<sup>81</sup>

## 4.5 Holdings and stockpiles

### 4.5.1 Ministry of Interior (MUP) holdings

The Ministry of Interior has traditionally been the chief body responsible for the provision of security in Serbia. While this survey was unable to obtain recent statistics on its SALW holdings, it did learn that there are approximately

<sup>73</sup> Figures provided to research team in correspondence with MUP Police Authority, 02/9 no: 66105.

<sup>74</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Belgrade, 'Privredna Komora Srbije', 2004.

<sup>75</sup> For example, *Trag Linija*, Belgrade.

<sup>76</sup> Of these, 2,395 are automatic and semi-automatic rifles; Article 17, Law on Weapons and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/2003.

<sup>77</sup> Peric-Zimonovic, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>79</sup> Simpson (b), 2005.

<sup>80</sup> The firm employees 1,600 employees.

<sup>81</sup> Saferworld interview with Alexander Radic, Journalist, VIP News, Belgrade, 08 September 2004.





30,000 police, border police and special police, along with 2,000 members of the Gendarmerie<sup>82</sup> and 3,400 firemen, all of whom have access to arms.<sup>83</sup>

Due to the lack of available MUP data it was necessary to consult other informed sources. Estimates of weapons held by frontline MUP personnel were between 1 and 3 per person, giving an average of 1.5<sup>84</sup>. Extrapolated to all MUP personnel this suggests a figure of 53,100 firearms. In addition to this number, there are approximately 9,000 firearms awaiting destruction from the previous amnesty that the MUP has in storage.<sup>85</sup> This gives a total figure of 62,100 firearms under the control of the MUP.

Holder	Number of Firearms
MUP Formation Firearms	53,100
MUP firearms awaiting destruction	9,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,100</b>

**Table 9: MUP Holdings**

MUP forces choose their own weapons so there are a variety of models across the police, customs and Gendarmerie. The Gendarmerie, for example, has equipment more commonly associated with the army, such as 40mm anti-aircraft weapons and 120mm mortars.<sup>86</sup>

## 4.5.2 Military holdings

Overall military size is decreasing in line with the reform process underway within the MoD. This is reflected in steadily decreasing expenditure on defence:

Year	Expenditure on defence (\$)	Percentage of GDP
1999	1.65 billion	12.4%
2002	686 million	4 %
2003	641 million	2.9%

**Table 10: Expenditure on defence<sup>87</sup>**

The 64% decrease in state expenditure over three years has been matched by a reduction in the number of SMAF personnel, falling by 31% over five years (see Table 11).

Service	March 1999	September 2004
Army	74,000	55,000 (25,000 conscripts)
Other services	23,000	10,300
Total armed forces	97,000	65,300

**Table 11: Size of Armed Forces<sup>88</sup>**

<sup>82</sup> Saferworld's correspondence with Vladimir Mihailovic, 03 October 2004.

<sup>83</sup> Saferworld interview with Col Slobodan Milickovic, MUP Fire Brigade Commander, 11 November 2004.

<sup>84</sup> Saferworld interview with Dejan Raketic, Captain, Fire Arms Department, Dept. of Administration of Border Police Secretariat, MUP Belgrade, 03 October 2004; Saferworld with Nikola Barovic, Barrister, Belgrade, 08 September 2004.

<sup>85</sup> The MoD confirmed that the remaining stockpile of 20,000 units of 'firearms and ordinance' included only 9,000 firearms. Official correspondence: Comments of the Ministry of Defence in response to the draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>86</sup> Saferworld interview with Dr James Lyon, Director Serbia Project, International Crisis Group Belgrade, 09 September 2004.

<sup>87</sup> The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2004.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



While the numerical strength and the budget of the armed forces have decreased substantially, the number of firearms has not yet fallen comparatively. As a consequence, the weapons-per-soldier ratio is likely to be higher today than it was in March 1999. Estimating this is complicated by the abrupt withdrawal of the former SFRJ Army from Slovenia and Croatia,<sup>89</sup> an action that was likely not to have involved any stocktaking process.

It is very hard to build up an accurate picture of the SMAFs SALW holdings as the MOD considers such information classified. In order to derive a realistic figure, a number of factors must be considered. Firstly, it is necessary to look at both reservist holdings and formation firearms:

**Reservist holdings:** Sources stated that historically SFRJ had a large reserve force and that each reservist had available in barracks one firearm.<sup>90</sup>

Before the outbreak of war in SFRJ, most men aged between 18 and 45 were obliged to register as reservists in case of national emergency. According to informed sources, approximately 20% of young men were officially excused from reservist service (the majority for health reasons) and a further estimated 25% were able to avoid service during this time.<sup>91</sup> This suggests that 55% of those men aged between 18 and 45 served as reservists and would therefore have had available to them a firearm. According to the 2002 Census there were 1,256,044 men aged between 20 and 44.<sup>92</sup> No census for 1992 is available, however, accepting the fact that the population will have changed during the proceeding ten years, and if the 2002 figure is used as a guide, then the number of reservists in 1992 was likely to have been approximately 690,000.

Accordingly, it can be assumed that a reasonable estimate for reservist-held SALW in Serbia in 1992 was 690,000. It is highly likely that in the interim 13 years a sizeable number of these firearms have either been scrapped or sold. Even if the total number of SALW destroyed between 1991 and 2003<sup>93</sup> (100,984)<sup>94</sup> is subtracted from the 690,000 figure, 589,016 remain. It is reasonable that these firearms are the most likely SALW to have been scrapped, as they are likely to be the oldest. It is also likely that a number of these firearms will have been exported as it is known that Jugoimport SDPR actively markets ex-MOD SALW.

**Formation firearms:** These represent the weapons that are serviced, stored and available for use on a regular basis. In September 2004 there were 65,300 armed personnel on active duty. The only official information provided by the MOD on SALW holdings was that “every soldier has a firearm”.<sup>95</sup> While at one level this is undoubtedly true, it is unlikely to be a realistic estimate for the overall holdings of the standing army. According to minimum internationally recognised figures for armed forces holdings, it is common practise for MoD facilities to hold at least 3% over a one-to-one ratio (which would mean an extra 1,959 weapons in barracks) bringing the total to 67,259. However, it is likely that this too is an underestimate. The Army’s website states that the infantry is equipped with “rifle, bazooka, recoilless arms, semi-automatic rocket”.<sup>96</sup> While it is reasonable to assume that every infantry soldier is equipped with a rifle, it is less likely that every infantry soldier will be issued a bazooka. However, from the Army’s description it is sensible to assume that, at a minimum, each infantry soldier would have available at least one other form of SALW.



**Firearms being prepared for destruction at SMAF Barracks, Topcider, Belgrade 2004**

<sup>89</sup> The Government of Slovenia Public and Media Office: [www.uvi.si/10years/path/war](http://www.uvi.si/10years/path/war).

<sup>90</sup> Op cit Bogosavljevic.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Census figure are not calculated for the 18-45 age bracket, and were not available for 1992.

<sup>93</sup> This number includes all weapons destroyed from MUP and MoD supplies. No breakdown was available.

<sup>94</sup> Op cit Hirst and Mariani.

<sup>95</sup> Official correspondence: comments of the Ministry of Defence in response to the draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>96</sup> Army website: [http://www.vj.yu/english/en\\_struktura/Vidovi/kov/pesadija.htm](http://www.vj.yu/english/en_struktura/Vidovi/kov/pesadija.htm).



### Other information

Other sources of information are available from key informants and the press. In 2004 the Chief of the General Staff announced the decommissioning of 80,000 infantry SALW,<sup>97</sup> which is considerably higher than the 65,300 figure that represents one weapon for each soldier.

A number of independent observers and ex-military personnel were consulted in order to gain alternative figures for functional MoD holdings. Estimates ranged from 100,000 to 500,000, with 200,000 functional SALW appearing to be the mean number. If the figure of 200,000 is accepted, this suggests that there are approximately three working weapons for every member of the armed forces, significantly higher than countries such as the UK and Germany<sup>98</sup> and in line with the MOD's Army website. It is however, three times the figure provided by the MOD.

In summary, this survey concludes that the SMAF holds in the region of 200,000 formation firearms and 589,016 SALW previously allocated for reservist use, representing total holdings of 789,016.

## 4.6 Production

As part of the SFRJ / FRY, Serbia had a highly productive industrial base with diverse interests in a range of light and heavy manufacturing. Defence production was a central part of this sector. Between 1989 and 2004 industrial production collapsed to the point that in 2004 output reached barely 35% of pre 1989 levels.

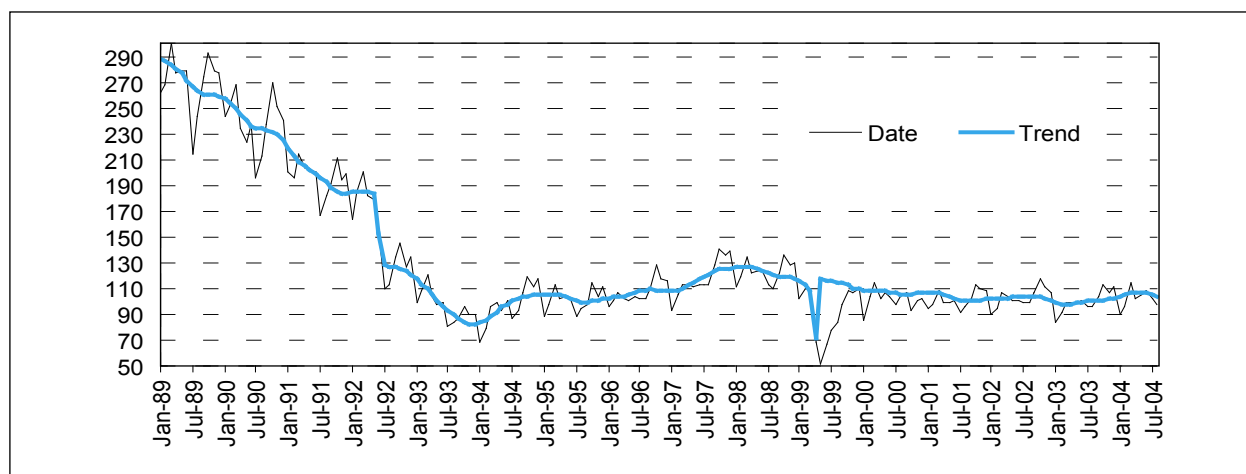


Figure 1: Industrial production Serbia 1989–2004<sup>99</sup>

Exact statistics on the size of defence production and pre-sale stockpiles are unavailable and are therefore not included in this survey. Figures provided by the government categorise production broadly, including weapons under the wider description of 'Metal Production' with no further breakdown available.

Prior to 1989 the Yugoslav defence industry was a major producer of SALW and ranked amongst the world's largest manufacturers of defence equipment,<sup>100</sup> with 31 separate manufacturers exporting their products. Because national defence was an integral part of Tito's Yugoslavia, the defence industry was given special status, constituting a mainstay of the economic and political system and a source of national pride.

The defence industry today is greatly reduced. There are eleven companies with defence related production, but in only six is this substantial. In total, these companies employ approximately 12,200 people,<sup>101</sup> with a further

<sup>97</sup> Lieutenant General Branko Krka confirmed that this reduction would amount to 80,000 infantry weapons being decommissioned; as quoted in CCMR: <http://ccmr-bg.org/analyze/rec/word37.htm>; accessed 05 February 2005.

<sup>98</sup> Email correspondence with Adrian Wilkinson, Team Leader, SEESAC, Belgrade, 17 October 2004.

<sup>99</sup> SMMRI analysis of industrial production data 1973–2004. Data provided by FSO.

<sup>100</sup> Jugoimport SDPR, 2004.

<sup>101</sup> Op cit Jugoimport SDPR.

20,000 engaged in the broader supply sector, suggesting that the true number of defence dependent jobs is approximately 32,000.<sup>102</sup>

Since the disintegration of FRY, the defence industry has contracted, lost many of its key export markets, failed to innovate technologically and is now confronted with a painful privatisation process. However, the viability of the defence industry is a matter of strongly contested debate. While economic indicators suggest that its sustainability is questionable, others hail it as “one of the few productive industries in the country”<sup>103</sup> with a “valuable capital and intellectual stock”.<sup>104</sup> Niche parts of the industry, such as the production of hunting rifles and updated versions of compact side arms, are thought to be profitable. Other potential competitive advantages that Serbian SALW producers may have are that whilst their production facilities are generally oriented towards western specifications, while they can also produce weapons and ammunition to Warsaw Pact specifications.<sup>105</sup>

At the ‘PARTNER’ Belgrade Arms Fair held in January 2004, Serbian companies displayed a large range of goods including: artillery weapons, tank components, aircraft and helicopters, missiles, anti-ballistic equipment, shells, explosives, communication equipment and firearms. The table below describes the most significant domestic exhibitors at PARTNER 2004:

Factory	Location	Production
Zastava Oruzje	Kragujevac	Pistols, rifles, grenade launchers, ammunition
Prvi Partizan	Uzice	Hunting rifles, ammunition
Prva Iskra	Baric	Explosives, gunpowder
Sloboda	Cacak	Grenade launchers, 30mm grenades
Milan Blagojevic	Lucani	Explosives, 20–40mm ammunition
Krusik	Valjevo	Ammunition

**Table 12: Principle arms factories in Serbia**

Amongst the bigger producers there is thought to be a great deal of excess capacity (estimated at between 60–70%).<sup>106</sup> In May 2004 Prime Minister Kostunica’s visit to the Zastava Oruzje factory was followed by a statement by the Serbian Government that it would “define measures to help boost production.”<sup>107</sup> The state’s relationship with the industry complicates matters because of the large subsidies the state has, in the past, paid to defence producers.

The defence industry survived a decade of social, political and economic crisis in part because it switched from export driven production to supplying the armed forces and the domestic market. Since 2000 this has contracted significantly and the armed forces can no longer sustain the industry through their own procurement. In the past year the MoD has instructed the manufacturers of SALW that MoD requirements can only account for 20% of current capacity, and it has specified the level of funding that will be available for new acquisitions.<sup>108</sup>

**Part-privatisation of the defence industry:** An MoD commission was formed to determine the future of state involvement in the defence industry. It concluded that the state would retain majority ownership in six ‘strategic’ companies that would guarantee continuing control over their management. The remaining 17 companies where the state had a controlling interest, it would reduce its involvement to between 23–46%, with private investors

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Op cit Moore–Bick.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Op cit Jugoimport SDPR.

<sup>106</sup> Op cit Hirst and Mariani.

<sup>107</sup> Serbian Government website ‘Problems in Kragujevac arms factory to be tackled’ <http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/vest.php?id=2181&q> accessed 15 May 2004.

<sup>108</sup> Vreme PM Davinic on destiny of military industry’ 17 September, 2004.



purchasing the remainder.<sup>109</sup> In those companies where state ownership falls below 50%, the commission announced that it had identified investors. One such company is UK registered London Consultants Associates (LCA), which according to the MoD has signed contracts with Zastava Oruzje.<sup>110</sup> Media sources suggest the level of investment is something in the order of 40 million Euros; however, attempts to substantiate this were unsuccessful<sup>111</sup>.

Partly in response to moves towards privatisation and the reduction in the size of the military, the defence industry has established the SCG Defence Industry Group to promote dialogue between, significant producers, holding and trading companies and the state.

Zastava Oruzje in Kragujevac is the largest defence company in the country with 3,600 employees.<sup>112</sup> It manufactures 22 varieties of handguns and rifles for civilian use including in 2004 the production of 30,000 hunting rifles<sup>113</sup> and a large variety of military-specification weapons including automatic grenade launchers.<sup>114</sup>

Zastava has been producing weapons since 1853 and was the main military supplier to the Yugoslav armed forces between 1945 and 1990, when 92% of its capacity was military, mainly in the form of the SAR 7.52, for decades the army's principal rifle. Zastava Oruzje is part of a larger company, Zastava Holding that manufactures cars and other products. The company has an export arm – based in Belgrade – called Zastava-Impex. Zastava Oruzje has recently developed cooperation agreements with foreign partners and is currently in talks with Israeli Military Industries (IMI) over the production of the 5.66mm Tavor assault rifle.<sup>115</sup> In response to questions put to IMI about their interest in arms manufacturers in Serbia, they responded only; "That part of the world is of interest to us."<sup>116</sup>

Zastava is struggling to adapt to new political and economic realities. Until recently the company was over one billion Dinars in debt to the government. These debts have, however, recently been written off by the state and the company is once more permitted to supply the army. Other contracts include supplying the armies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.<sup>117</sup>

According to informed sources, Zastava Oruzje's future viability hinges on its ability to successfully produce the body of the NATO specification 5.56mm M21 assault rifle, both for domestic and export markets.<sup>118</sup> At the time of writing, the SCG army was currently field-testing the M21, and if the factory begins full production its future should be more certain. According to the media, Zastava's other SALW military production consists of the new 7.62mm M91 sniper rifle (to replace the M76); and the new 12.7mm M93 long-range rifle (the so-called Black Arrow).<sup>119</sup>

A recent report by Deloitte and Touche studied the viability of Zastava and while the conclusions are not publicly known, the media reported that it advocated breaking up its factories into smaller companies.<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Op cit Jugoimport SDPR.

<sup>110</sup> MOD Website: [www.mod.gov.yu/arhiva/VSCG/2004/aktivnosti\\_VSCG\\_novembar2004.htm](http://www.mod.gov.yu/arhiva/VSCG/2004/aktivnosti_VSCG_novembar2004.htm).

<sup>111</sup> According to Companies House, LCA is registered to a suburban London office, has no staff except a director and has not disclosed any financial activity since it was first registered in 2004.

<sup>112</sup> Op cit Moore-Bick.

<sup>113</sup> Colonel Marinko Petrović, in an interview with *Danas*, quoted in *VIP News*, 26 December 2004.

<sup>114</sup> Zastava Oruzje website [www.zastava-arms.co.yu/](http://www.zastava-arms.co.yu/) accessed 30 November 2004.

<sup>115</sup> *VIP News* 03 February 2005, as quoted in *Vreme*, Zastava factory Director Dragoljub Grujovic states that talks with IMI and Zastava over the production of the Tavor were renewed.

<sup>116</sup> Telephone interview with Motti Eis, Marketing Department, IMI, 11 March 2005.

<sup>117</sup> Op cit Israeli Military Industries, 2003.

<sup>118</sup> Op cit Radic.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> *Defence and Security* 'Zastava Arms Union Opposes Firing Workers', 03 September 2004.

Prvi Partizan in Uzice claims to be the largest ammunition producer in South Eastern Europe.<sup>121</sup> The factory employs 2,400 workers manufacturing a wide range of civilian and military ammunition and hunting rifles. Prior to the 1990s, the wholly state-owned company relied heavily on supplying SFRJ security services and European and North American export markets. According to its website,<sup>122</sup> the factory manufactures civilian ammunition and the following military ammunition:

- 5.56 x 45mm;
- 7.62 x 39mm;
- 7.62 x 51mm NATO;
- 7.62 x 54mm;
- 7.9 x 57mm;
- 12.7 x 107mm; and
- Armour piercing ammunition.

## 4.7 Exports

Serbia appears to export significant quantities of SALW around the world. It does not produce an annual report detailing its arms exports and both the MOD and MIER were unable to discuss details of export licensing decisions, destinations or other export procedures in any detail. Relatively recent cases of arms embargos being violated by Serbian companies that facilitated arms exports to Liberia and Iraq in 2002 acted as a catalyst for reform including introduction of new legislation in early 2005.<sup>123</sup>

The only case where the state has acknowledged trade between a SCG company and a foreign state was the case of Zastava Oruzje exporting rifles to clients in the United States in 2004.<sup>124</sup> Zastava Oruzje confirmed this and put its value at \$7.5 million.<sup>125</sup> In an attempt to develop a comprehensive understanding of Serbia's arms exports it was necessary to draw on a number of sources, including the state-owned import-export firm Jugimport SDPR, directors of other arms manufacturers, and journalists.

While it is not possible to officially establish to which states Serbian companies are currently exporting, it is possible to establish i) States to which Serbia has traditionally exported; and ii) which states the Serbian defence industry is currently considering as future export markets:

**Traditional markets:** According to the state import-export firm Jugimport SDPR and the director of the Zastava Oruzje factory, some of the traditional markets for Serbian-produced weaponry include Angola, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Mozambique, Sudan and Venezuela.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Prvi Partizan website <http://www.prvipartizan.com>.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> BBC International Monitoring Report, 09 May 2003.

<sup>124</sup> Director of Zastava, as quoted on MFA website: 'Zastava weapons in U.S. Market as of Dec 1'; available at [www.mfa.gov.yu/Policy/Bilateral/USA/activities\\_e/061103\\_2\\_e.html](http://www.mfa.gov.yu/Policy/Bilateral/USA/activities_e/061103_2_e.html), accessed 15 February 2005.

<sup>125</sup> Op cit Zastava Oruzje website.

<sup>126</sup> According to the Jugimport SDPR Report of June 2004, the company has, in the past, concluded deals with Kuwait (May 1989 exports of M-84A) and Venezuela. The Director of Zastava Oruzje, Dragoljub Grujovic, told VIP News that the manufacturer is owed large sums by Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. *VIP News*, January 2005.

<sup>127</sup> Op cit Jugimport SDPR.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.



**Emerging markets:** Jugoimport SDPR is currently aggressively trying to re-enter markets from which it has been excluded during a decade of sanctions and embargoes, and is “returning to markets in South America, South Eastern and Central Asia and the Middle East.”<sup>127</sup> This is further evidenced by Jugoimport SDPR’s 2004 Annual Report which states that “the weapons from the army stock could be upgraded, overhauled and then offered to under-equipped armies in Africa, Asia and South America.”<sup>128</sup>

In January 2005 a senior delegation of politicians and businessmen, including the Serbian President Boris Tadic, the Director of Jugoimport SDPR Stevan Nikcevic and the head of the Defence Material Resources Sector General Ivan Djokic, travelled to Tripoli in Libya. Although there are no details of the discussions that took place, Stevan Nikcevic reported to the media that talks had been “extremely significant.”<sup>129</sup>

According to Jugoimport SDPR, the Serbian defence industry exports finished firearms and components to an Israeli firm, thought to be Israeli Military Industries (IMI)<sup>130</sup>. Further information on the relationship between IMI and Serbian defence companies was not available to this survey.

Another source of information about possible new export markets includes representation at foreign trade fairs.

In 2003 Jugoimport SDPR organised a one-day exhibition in western Serbia, which saw foreign guests – including a representative from Rwanda<sup>131</sup> – attend a functional demonstration of various types of SALW and heavy weapons.

During 2003 and 2004, Jugoimport SDPR attended many large arms fairs in developing states, including, DSA in Kuala Lumpur (2004), SOFEX in Amman (2004), IDEX in Abu Dhabi (2003), LAD in Rio de Janeiro (2003). Attendance at fairs within the former Yugoslavia such as PARTNER in Belgrade (2004) and DEFENCE in Skopje (2001) demonstrates that the company is also targeting former domestic markets for future export sales, and it has been widely reported that the Macedonian armed forces have finalised a contract for the M21 rifle.<sup>132</sup> Jugoimport SDPR has also been attempting to build on Serbia’s already established position as a manufacturer and exporter of hunting rifles. The company’s attendance at the Nuremburg Hunting and Sport Shooting fair in 2004 evidences this.

Cooperation between Jugoimport SDPR and the SCG MoD has always been significant and the company’s 2004 Annual Report describes the relationship as ‘inevitable by nature’.<sup>133</sup> Jugoimport SDPR is headed by a nine-member board of directors and a president who are appointed by the SCG Council of Ministers. Currently, the President of Jugoimport SDPR is the Minister of Defence Prvoslav Davinic.<sup>134</sup> Jugoimport SDPR is the principle entity responsible for most exports of SALW from Serbia. The company acts as an umbrella company for seven companies dealing with civilian and military equipment and engineering, with small arms constituting a significant part. The company also has a Research and Development arm, created in part to help make its exports more competitive.

**Inventory:** The inventory of SALW available for purchase from Serbian manufacturers is significant. Much of the equipment is surplus or excess stock and current production models are far fewer than Jugoimport SDPR’s exhaustive catalogue would suggest.

Military SALW available:<sup>135</sup>

- CZ99 combat hand gun 9 x 19mm
- CZ999 combat hand gun 9 x 19mm

---

<sup>129</sup> VIP News, 03 February 2005.

<sup>130</sup> Saferworld interview with Jugoimport SDPR official, Belgrade.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Op cit Radic.

<sup>133</sup> OP cit Jugoimport SDPR.

<sup>134</sup> Ministers of Defence are not necessarily also President of Jugoimport SDPR.

<sup>135</sup> Op cit Jugoimport SDPR.



- Top XX sporting/ combat pistol 9 x 19mm
- Master FLG submachine gun family 9 x 19mm (Kalashnikov design)
- M97/K submachine gun 9 x 19mm
- M84 general-purpose machine gun 7.62 x 54mm (GPMG)
- M82 light machine gun 7.62 x 54mm
- M84 automatic machine gun 7.62 x 54mm
- M85 carbine 5.56 x 45mm
- M90 rifle 5.56 x 45mm
- M95 rifle 5.56 x 45mm
- M99 assault rifle and carbine 5.56 x 45mm
- M21 assault weapon with integrated grenade launcher (NATO standard)
- M70 automatic assault rifle 7.62 x 39mm (fully automatic)
- M72 automatic light machine gun 7.62 x 39mm (fully automatic)
- M92 automatic carbine 7.62 x 39mm
- M77 automatic assault rifle 7.62 x 39mm
- M76 semi-automatic sniper rifle 7.92 x 57mm
- M91 semi-automatic sniper rifle 7.62 x 54mm
- Black Arrow Anti Material Rifle 12.7 x 99mm
- M93 Grenade launcher 30mm
- 40mm under barrel grenade launcher
- Rifle-mounted hand-grenade launchers
- Rifle-grenade launcher
- 64mm ZOLJA light rocket launcher (disposable)
- 90mm OSA multi purpose assault weapon
- 120mm anti-tank rocket launcher (disposable)
- 82mm Recoilless guns
- Maljutka anti-tank guided missile
- Bumber (Bumble Bee) Short range anti- tank guided missile system
- Mortars 60mm, 81/82mm, 120mm
- Strela-2M (MANPADS)

**Routes:** Large-scale shipments of SALW from Serbia are normally transported via cargo ship from the port of Bar in Montenegro. Such a route involves shipment over land and a customs checkpoint at the Serbia–Montenegro border. From Bar ships depart to destinations such as the US on a monthly basis and are available for charter to other destinations on an ad hoc basis.<sup>136</sup> Other routes of officially traded arms have passed through Belgrade's Surcin Airport from where charter aircraft can deliver to destinations worldwide.<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>136</sup> Op cit Jugoimport SDPR official.

<sup>137</sup> Op cit BBC Monitoring International Reports.





## 4.8 Illicit small arms transfers

Trafficking activity across Serbia's state and administrative borders can be assessed by incorporating the observations and findings of border police, key informants,<sup>138</sup> seizures declared in media as well as previous studies of the problem:

Border <sup>139</sup>	Length (km)	Type of trafficking reported <sup>140</sup>
Romania	544	Drugs, human beings
Bosnia and Herzegovina	391	Arms, human beings, petrol
Bulgaria	371	Arms, heroin, human beings
Croatia	315	Arms, heroin, cocaine
Macedonia	252	Cigarettes, heroin, cocaine
Montenegro	236	Petrol, cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine
Hungary	166	Human beings, heroin
Kosovo <sup>141</sup>	352	Arms, human beings, heroin, cocaine <sup>142</sup>

**Table 13: Length of borders and main trafficking activities**

### The trafficking environment

Authorities face several challenges in controlling illicit trafficking beyond issues of capacity (see sections 7.3.2 – 7.3.9). The following factors contribute to the difficult operating environment:

- **Geography:** Serbia sits on the main Asia-Europe land route that traffickers have used for transporting illicit goods.<sup>143</sup> It has over 2,000 kilometres of international borders with six countries, most of which did not exist in 1990. To Serbia's south and west, mountainous terrain characterises its borders with Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **Transit:** Over seven million passenger cars and 1.5 million lorries transit SCG every year. In addition there are approximately 18,000 flights to and from its airports.<sup>144</sup> 'Corridor Ten' - linking Salzburg in Austria to Thessaloniki in Greece - runs the length of Serbia.
- **Ethnic tensions:** Over the last ten years, tensions have fuelled the demand for firearms, either for self-protection or insurgency. This was most recently visibly demonstrated in southern Serbia in 2001.
- **Economics:** High levels of unemployment and regional wealth disparities have also meant trafficking in illicit goods is sometimes an attractive income generating activity.
- **Organised crime networks:** Between 1990-2003, organised criminal networks thrived across Serbia, establishing their influence over most areas of business<sup>145</sup>. One activity many of these groups engaged in was trafficking in illicit or embargoed goods. While efforts have been made to counter their influence, most key informants believe that organised crime networks retain much of their presence.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Key informants are Neil Barnett, Independent Journalist, interview with Saferworld, 11 October 2004, and Lyon (op cit).

<sup>139</sup> Border lengths were only available for SCG borders. The Kosovo and Montenegrin borders are administrative rather than state borders.

<sup>140</sup> Based on semi-structured interviews with border guards, and key informant interviews with Barnett (op cit) and Lyon (op cit).

<sup>141</sup> The term Kosovo is used to refer to Kosovo and Metohija or the Internationally Administered Entity of Kosovo.

<sup>142</sup> Statistical Office of Kosovo, 'Kosovo in Figures 2004', [http://www.sok-kosovo.org/pdf/general/Kosovo\\_in\\_figures\\_2004.pdf](http://www.sok-kosovo.org/pdf/general/Kosovo_in_figures_2004.pdf), accessed 18 November 2004.

<sup>143</sup> UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044901612198#> accessed 30 November 2004.; and Serbia MUP website: <http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/mup.nsf/index1-e.html>.

<sup>144</sup> Saferworld interview with Dusan Zlokas, National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, MUP, Belgrade, 08 September 2004.

<sup>145</sup> Marko Nicovic, as quoted on BBC Online, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3340623>.

<sup>146</sup> Saferworld interview with Marko Maljkovic, Project Manager,, Media Centre, Belgrade, 21 February 2005.



## The volume of trafficking

A combination of an improvement in the security environment, a reduction in ethnic conflict, weakened demand owing probably to market saturation and an increase in law enforcement capacity has contributed to a decrease in trafficking levels, as witnessed by a decrease in border interceptions.

Figures provided to this survey on weapons seizures by the MUP in 2003 failed to distinguish between weapons seized internally and weapons seized at borders. Alternative figures available from the Security Intelligence Service (BIA) showed that in the first four months of 2004 €300,000 worth of “weapons, army equipment and crude oil derivatives were seized”. Unfortunately, no detailed breakdown was available.<sup>147</sup>



**Surplus firearms awaiting destruction at SMAF Barracks, Topcider, Belgrade 2004**

Intelligence sources point to the increasing popularity of smaller forms of transportation such as cars and vans.<sup>148</sup> Non-cargo crossings are now relatively more vulnerable to trafficking than in previous years, and as one key informant stated “You can fit a lot of nasty stuff in the trunk of a car.”<sup>149</sup> For many years, border authorities searched every vehicle.<sup>150</sup> However with pressures to facilitate increased trade<sup>151</sup> despite few new resources,<sup>152</sup> intercepting trafficking activity is increasingly difficult.

Black market prices are one method of gauging the volume of small arms in circulation, the theory being that a low market price will often equate to a high supply or ‘saturation’ of handguns in a given environment.<sup>153</sup>

With regards to firearms produced outside Serbia that are being sold on the black market, it is very likely that they will also have been trafficked into the country. The following estimates of black market prices for firearms available in Belgrade are indicative only and were gathered from members of the public and key informants.

Commodity	Mean black market price
AK 200	€300 <sup>154</sup>
Scorpion submachine gun	€200
Jug TT	€125
Glock 21	€650
Ammunition	€1 / round

**Table 14: Average black market prices of weapons in Belgrade**

<sup>147</sup> BIA website, [http://www.bia.sr.gov.yu/Eng/frameset\\_e.html](http://www.bia.sr.gov.yu/Eng/frameset_e.html).

<sup>148</sup> Watkins, 2004.

<sup>149</sup> Saferworld interview with Brian Stickney, Program Advisor Export Controls and Border Security, U.S. Embassy Belgrade, Belgrade, 07 September 2004

<sup>150</sup> Op cit Zlokas.

<sup>151</sup> Saferworld interviews with Zlokas and Dejan Raketic, Captain, Fire Arms Department, Dept. of Administration of Border Police Secretariat, MUP Belgrade, 03 October 2004.

<sup>152</sup> Op cit Stickney.

<sup>153</sup> “Market factors and how they effect prices”, [http://www.savvysurvivor.com/market\\_factors\\_and\\_how\\_they\\_afe.htm](http://www.savvysurvivor.com/market_factors_and_how_they_afe.htm), 15 March 2005.

<sup>154</sup> Op cit Barovic, and Saferworld interview with Bojan Vidovic, Customs Administration, Ministry of Finance, Belgrade, 08 September 2004; all other black market figures provided by Vasic (op cit).



**A road sign photographed in Serbia 2003**

The relatively low price of domestically produced firearms such as the Jug TT suggests that they are easily available. Key informants indicated that domestic models satisfied the majority of those people purchasing firearms illegally and thus it is unlikely that foreign-made equivalents would be trafficked into Serbia. However, there did appear to be exceptions to this rule. Key informants stated that firearms such as AK-47s, 9mm and 7.62mm pistols, Heckler & Koch MP5Ks were popular choices of the criminal elite.<sup>155</sup> These 'weapons of aspiration' are strictly controlled by the state and it appears very few people have licenses to own them, suggesting that those firearms that are found are sourced on the black market and are likely to have been trafficked into Serbia. These firearms were used in a series of high-profile assassinations throughout 2003 and 2004. A Heckler and Koch G3 rifle was used

to murder Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic in 2003 while similarly formidable weapons were used to assassinate Branko Jevtovic and in the attempted assassination of Andrija Draškovic also in 2004.

#### **4.8.1 Commodity interdependence**

The relative deterioration of market conditions for weapons appears to have driven some of the traffickers into different fields that exploit the same networks, such as trafficking drugs and people.<sup>156</sup> Now that Serbia is now free of armed conflict, traffickers have found illicit drugs a more profitable commodity. According to informed sources,<sup>157</sup> drugs and weapons are smuggled together for purely practical reasons: both require similar forms of transportation and both incur similarly severe punishments. This was reiterated by law enforcement officials who stated, "In searches for narcotics we find guns; when searching for people you will find drugs."<sup>158</sup>

During research into trafficking in human beings, conducted for the OSCE by the Victimology Society of Serbia, out of 123 people interviewed, 66 believed there was a connection between human and other forms of trafficking. A further 15 reported a connection between trafficking in people, drugs and arms.<sup>159</sup> Earlier research into trafficking in Serbia and key informants' contributions identified different kinds of traffickers. The OSCE Trafficking in People in Serbia report<sup>160</sup> distinguished between 'individuals involved in the chain of trafficking in people' and 'organised criminal groups' engaged in trafficking. Key informants supported such a distinction, holding that entrepreneurial or opportunist traffickers were engaged in trafficking as a way of making money in a difficult economic environment. This was in contrast to the organised traffickers who operated like a company with a management structure and delegated powers, even investing in the local community.<sup>161</sup> Such a distinction is useful as the nature of the trafficking activity has implications for the way that law enforcement agencies seek to tackle it.<sup>162</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Op cit Raketic.

<sup>156</sup> Op cit Nikolic-Ristanovic et al.

<sup>157</sup> Saferworld interview with Aaron Presnall, Director, Jefferson Institute, Belgrade, 16 November 2004.

<sup>158</sup> Op cit Zlokas

<sup>159</sup> Op cit Nikolic-Ristanovic et al.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Op cit Presnall.

<sup>162</sup> Op cit MUP (a).

## 5 Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS)

The section examines the direct and indirect impact of SALW on society in Serbia, particularly in relation to SALW use in crime, trafficking, the effects on different groups in society, and overall perceptions of security and the economy. It provides a broad overview, as limitations in the data available hinder a more in-depth study. This limitation is due to factors such as poor record-keeping procedures and lack of publicly available statistics, as well as additional complications arising from the reluctance of citizens to report incidents involving SALW. As far as possible, official data sources have been used. This was complemented by an analysis of media coverage of SALW issues published between 2003 and 2004.



A road sign photographed in Serbia 2003

### 5.1 SALW and crime

Comprehensive official crime figures were not available, although according to the annual reports of the Ministry of Interior, overall crime rates in the Republic of Serbia have been declining since 2001.<sup>163</sup> If accurate, this could be attributed to the ongoing reorganisation of the police service, which has resulted in improved prevention work. On the whole, theft is the crime most likely to affect Serbian citizens, although this seems only infrequently to involve small arms. From the household survey undertaken as part of this research, of the 10% of respondents who had been a victim of crime in the past two years, only 5% said that firearms had either been used, or their use threatened. From the media analysis, 25% of texts covering crime incidents in 2003 mentioned SALW and in 2004, the percentage decreased to 21% (see Figure 2).

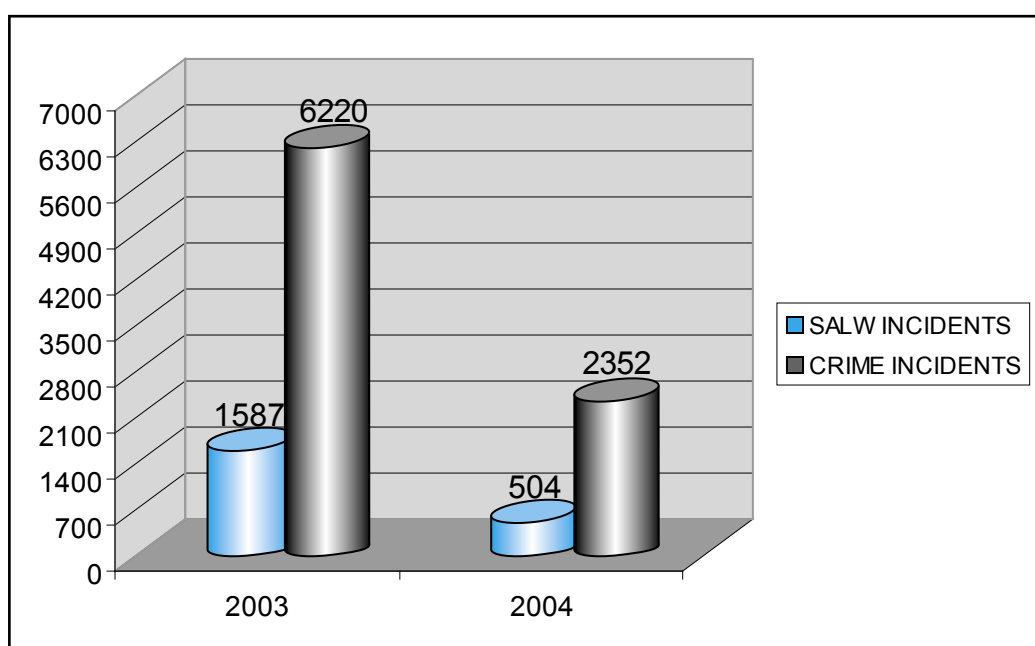
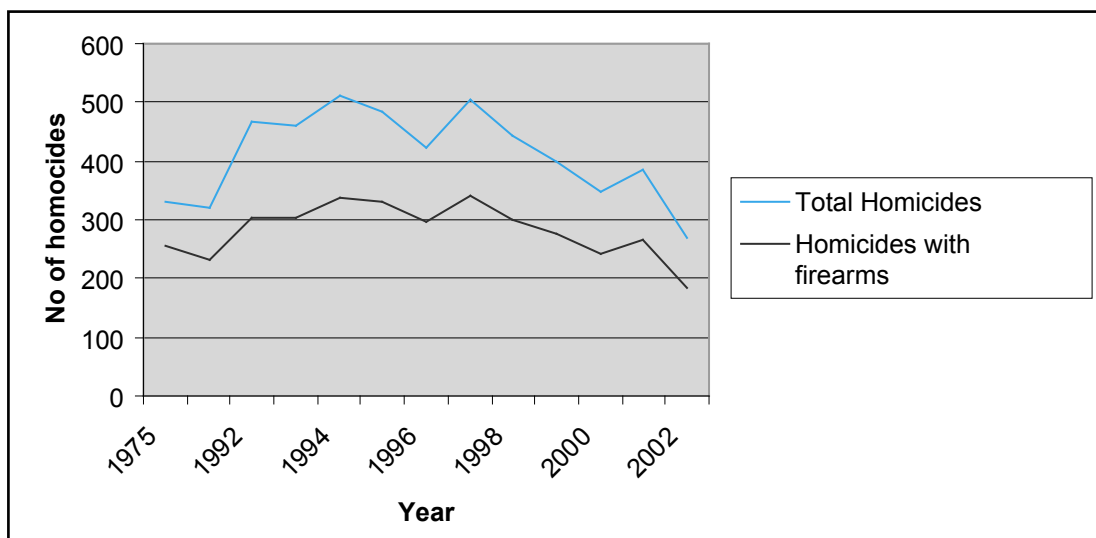


Figure 2: Crime and SALW incidents as reported in the media

The incidence of SALW used during armed robberies is high. Fourteen percent of household survey respondents felt that this was one of the crimes causing the greatest insecurity in Serbia today. Figures from the Ministry of Justice indicate that the proportion of cases of armed robbery in relation to the overall number of crimes has risen from 1.9% in 2001, to 4.2% in 2003. At the same time, both criminal charges and convictions have declined during this period – from 2.3% to 2% in 2001 and from 2.8% to 2.4% in 2003.

<sup>163</sup> MUP (c), Activity Report 2003 [http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/skzn.nsf/fc9e82a3073a74fac1256c3200393d62/\\$FILE/izvestaj2003.pdf](http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/skzn.nsf/fc9e82a3073a74fac1256c3200393d62/$FILE/izvestaj2003.pdf).



**Figure 3: Number of homicides in Serbia 1975–2002**

The number of homicides committed using firearms has quite a strong impact on the overall homicide trend, since the two follow very similar patterns (see Figure 3). In 2002, Serbia had a rate of 2.44 homicides per 100,000, and a rate of 1.14 homicides committed with firearms per 100,000.<sup>164</sup> This means that in 2002 just under half the homicides in Serbia were committed using firearms. Serbia's homicide rate lies between those of Macedonia and Finland, and is lower than those of Albania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania; however, the proportion of homicides with firearms is relatively high in comparison with other countries.<sup>165</sup>

Detailed hospital data on firearms injuries was not available, although an idea of the impact of SALW can be gauged from Institute of Public Health figures of patients treated in Belgrade hospitals during 2002. They suggest that 0.3% of all cases that were admitted to hospital were firearms related injuries.<sup>166</sup> This figure is very low and most likely conceals the true scale of injuries caused by firearms. Frequently people are reluctant to admit the true nature of their injuries and therefore claim other reasons, or do not even go to hospital for treatment. Record keeping in hospitals can also lead to an underestimation of the number of firearms-related injuries, as they are sometimes recorded under a different type of injury, such as injuries to internal organs.

Serbia has a suicide rate of 20.9 per 100,000, a figure that is above the average for European countries (13.6 for males and 4.3 for females 1999–2001),<sup>167</sup> but is still lower than many northern European countries such as France and Finland. In a survey of firearms suicides in 34 countries in 1998, Serbia's rate of 3.08 firearms suicides per 100,000 in 1998 is comparable with that of Canada (3.3) and New Zealand (2.5), lower than that of the United States (7.2) but higher than countries such as the UK and Japan (both below 1).<sup>168</sup> In the same survey, the percentage of suicides committed with firearms ranged from 0.2% in Japan to 70% in Brazil and the average was 18.7%. As illustrated in the chart below the percentage of firearms suicides in Serbia between 1998 and 2002 has remained quite constant, at a level of around 15%.

Although celebratory shooting is illegal in Serbia, it is still common practice. Almost all participants in the focus group discussions claimed to have heard or witnessed it and during the key informant interviews a senior officer in the Firearms Department of the Ministry of Interior stated that it is one of the main SALW problems in Serbia. However, he also remarked that very few casualties arise from it.<sup>169</sup> No figures were available indicating the number of deaths or injuries resulting from celebratory shooting and the actual impact of this phenomenon does

<sup>164</sup> Unpublished data of Institute of Public Health, Belgrade. Provided by SMMRI.

<sup>165</sup> Small Arms Survey (a), 2004, p 13.

<sup>166</sup> Unpublished Institute of Public Health data on patients treated in Belgrade hospitals in 2002. Provided by SMMRI.

<sup>167</sup> Smith, 2004.

<sup>168</sup> United Nations, 1998.

<sup>169</sup> Op cit Raketic.

not seem to be of sufficient concern to motivate either the public or the police to act against it. Figures from the Ministry of Interior indicate that there were only 186 reported cases of unauthorised shooting in public places during 2003 and the media review identified only ten articles on this topic, nine of which covered the same incident.

## Box 2: Media report on plane shot down in celebratory shooting incident

### Wedding guests in Serbia accidentally shoot down small plane

*BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro (AP) - In an apparent first, wedding guests shooting off celebratory rounds in central Serbia brought down a small aircraft, local media reported Sunday. The FoNet news agency reported that the plane's pilot and a passenger were seriously injured Friday after their single-engine Utva-75 plane crashed into a high-voltage power line in the village of Ratina, some 160 kilometres west of Belgrade.*

*"Shortly before the crash I saw the plane flying at a very low altitude over a wedding party when guests started firing their hand guns and other weapons," witness Zoran Vukadinovic told FoNet. The left wing of the aircraft subsequently caught fire, and the plane crashed, he said.*

*Shootings and fatalities are frequent at Serbian weddings because of the centuries-long tradition of blasting away with firearms in celebration. It was the first known reported case, however, of an aircraft being brought down by trigger-happy partygoers.*

*Attempts to trace Vukadinovic were unsuccessful, with FoNet refusing to divulge his phone number. Police confirmed the plane crash but refused to discuss its cause.*

*The pilot apparently was unlicensed, said FoNet, citing authorities, and the flight was unauthorised.*

*Source: Associated Press via Sun Media, October 12th 2003.*

While gun trafficking levels in Serbia appear to be decreasing, semi-structured interview sources felt that it still has an impact on their communities. This is more so the case in towns close to former conflict zones. In Vranje and Loznica, for instance, sources reported cases in which border staff had been threatened and civilians had been shot at during incidents involving gun trafficking. Furthermore they felt that gun trafficking led to increased weapons possession and heightened tension in the community. In Pirot and Subotica, some sources felt that the illegal trade did not have any impact on levels of possession, although others were of the opinion that it could increase the risk of uncontrolled and inappropriate use of weapons.

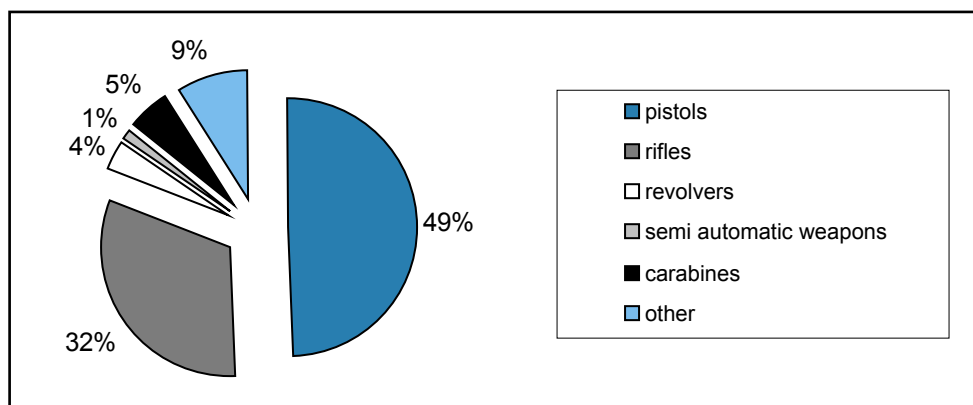


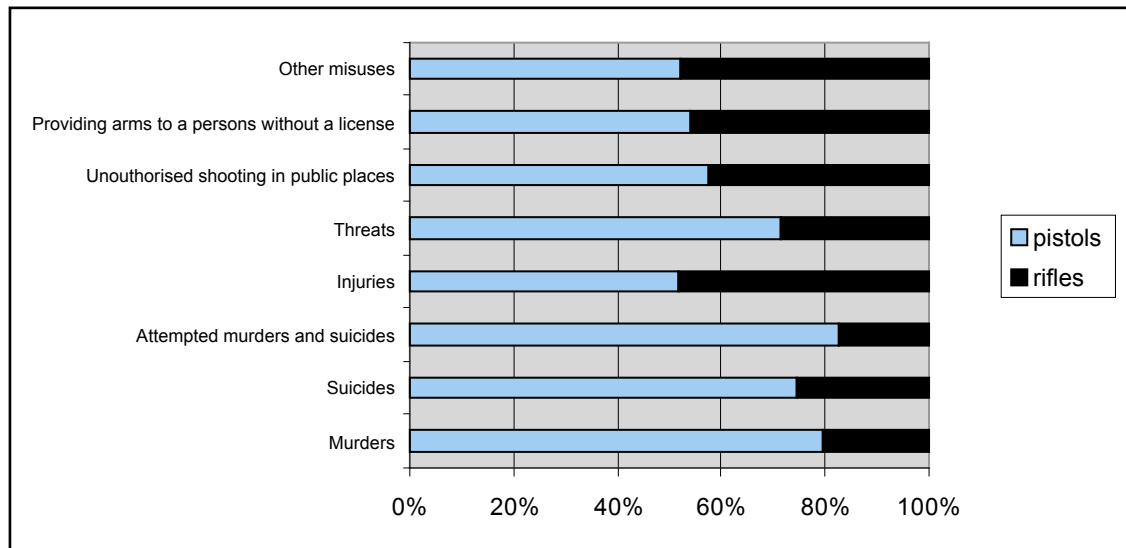
Figure 4: Types of firearms as a proportion of total incidents of firearms misuse

Figures provided by the MUP indicate that pistols were the type of firearm most commonly misused in 2003, followed by rifles (see Figure 4). These figures correspond relatively closely with figures for registered weapons (45% of registered weapons are pistols, 40% are rifles, 10% carabines, 4% revolvers, 1% unspecified and under 1% semi-automatic). This would illustrate that misuse is roughly proportional to the distribution of a certain type of weapon within the population.



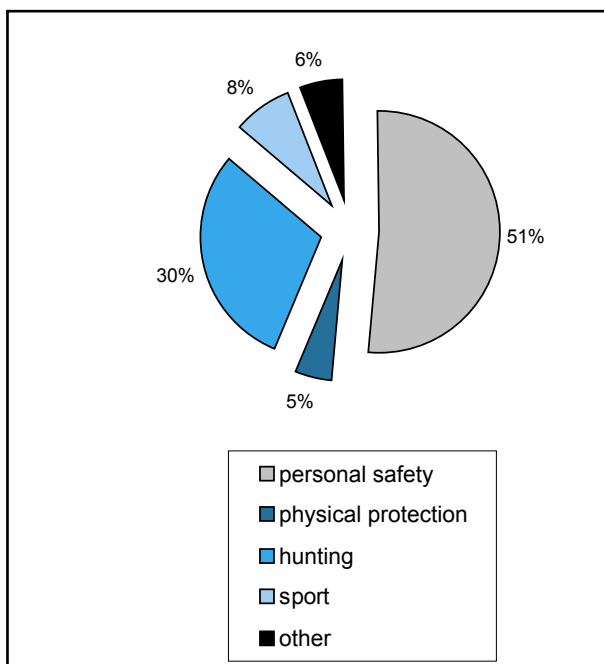


Looking at the two most commonly misused types of weapons, rifles and pistols, it can be seen in Figure 5 that pistols are more frequently used in the more serious types of crime such as murders, attempted murders and threats, while rifles are more frequently used in cases of unauthorised shooting in public places and illegal possession.

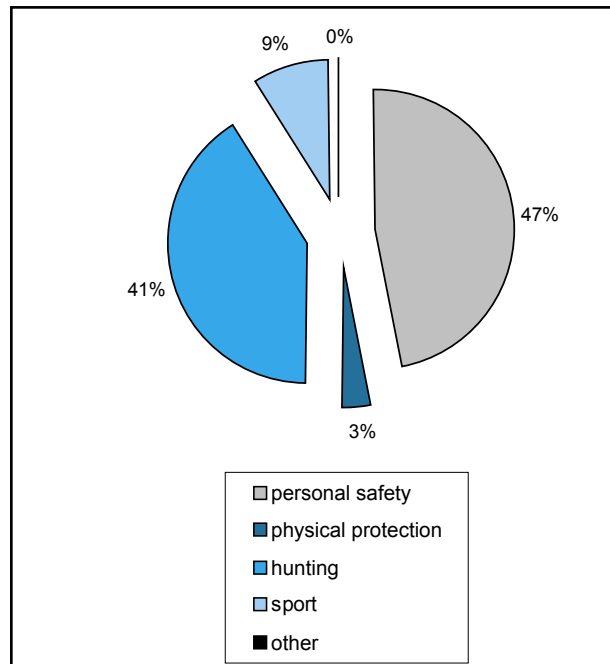


**Figure 5: Incidents of firearms misuse and types of weapons used**

The MUP places firearms permits in different classifications: personal safety, physical protection and security of property, hunting weapons, sports and others (anaesthetics and light and sound signals). The percentage of firearms falling into each of these categories is illustrated in Figure 6. Figure 7 shows the purpose for which each firearm is registered as a proportion of crimes committed. Firearms registered for personal safety and those registered for 'other' purposes are slightly more likely to be misused, whilst the proportion of hunting weapons misused is lower than the total proportion of hunting weapons. This could lead to the conclusion that hunting firearms are more likely to be used responsibly than those registered for personal security.



**Figure 7: Purpose for which weapons are registered as a proportion of total crimes committed**



**Figure 8: Percentage of weapons registered in different categories**



### 5.1.1 A case study of SALW and crime from the media

As part of the media analysis, a sample of articles from Serbian newspapers was randomly selected during seven two-week periods between January 2003 and July 2004. The 76 articles on incidents involving SALW were analysed to give a picture of the location of the incident, the time the incident occurred, the actors involved, the type of weapon used and the type and outcome of the incident. While this analysis does not presume to be a completely accurate reflection of SALW crime in Serbia, it is nevertheless useful in building a picture of the problem.

The majority of reported incidents occurred in Belgrade, followed by central Serbia and then Vojvodina. Just under three quarters of the incidents (72%) happened in public places, and 25% took place on private property. Most incidents occurred during the afternoon and at night (see Figure 8).

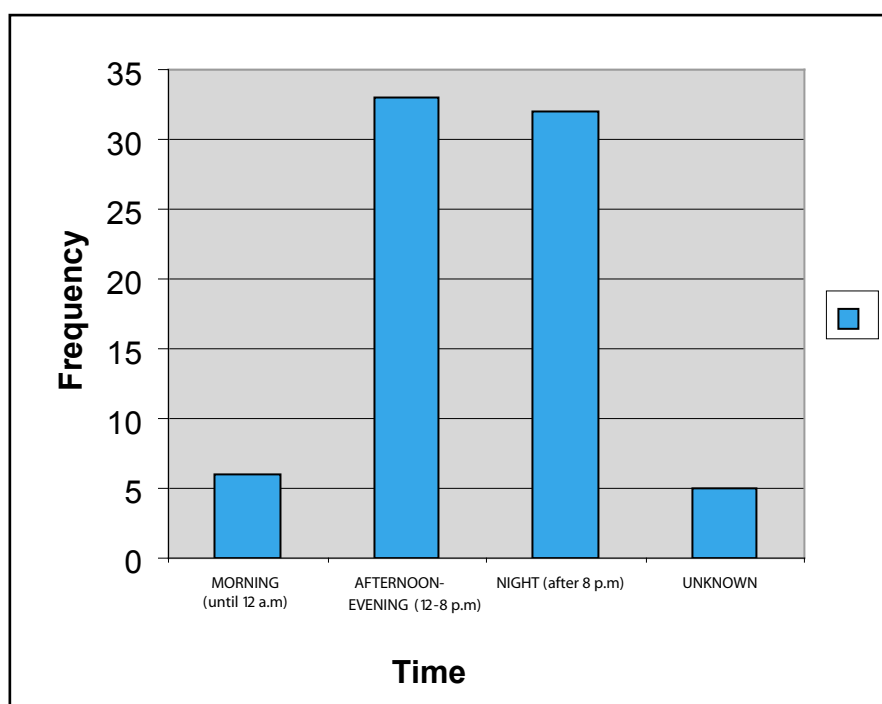


Figure 8: Time of Incident

Less can be said about the actors involved in the incident. Two thirds of the perpetrators were unknown (67%) and of those that were known, the majority were Serbian, three were Bosnian and two were Roma. Looking at the ages, none particularly stands out as there is an even spread of perpetrators in each age category (see Table 15). In a few of the articles, the occupations of the perpetrators were included – 6 were unemployed and 2 were government employees.

Age (years)	No of incidents
< 18	6
19-26	9
27-35	7
36-45	4
46-55	6
55+	4
Unknown	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>

Table 15: Age range of Perpetrators



The most common types of incident were robberies (see section 10), followed by murders or attempted murders and then public endangerment. In the majority of cases weapons were used to threaten. In 18 cases the incident resulted in an injury and in another 18, the outcome was fatal. In 61% of cases a handgun was used and 14% of the articles mentioned an explosive device. Other types of weapons reported include rifles and automatic firearms.

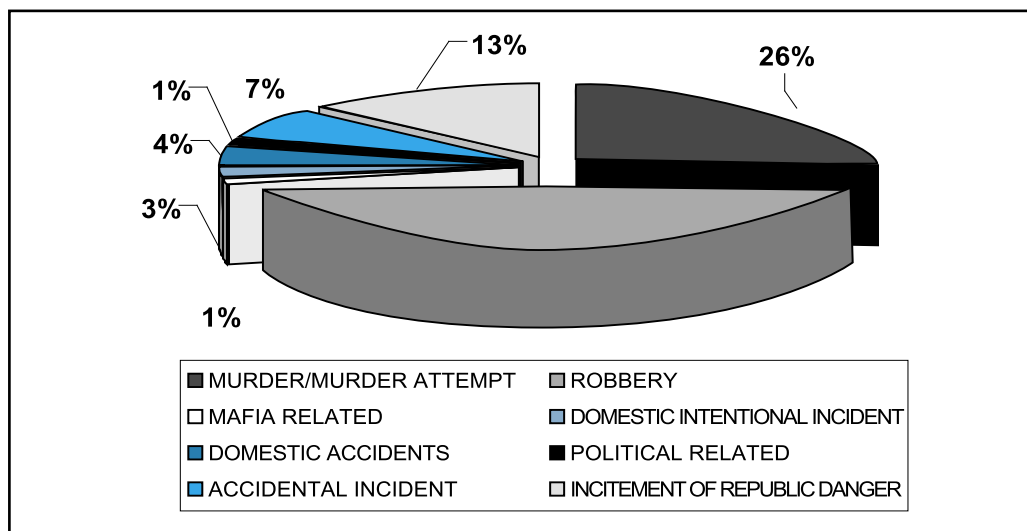


Figure 9: Type of incident

## 5.2 SALW and gender

Official figures on women injured or killed by firearms were not available. However, an indication of how women are affected by SALW can be gained by looking at international patterns. Compared to men, women are unlikely to either commit, or be the victim of, arms-related crimes. Women are also much less likely to commit suicide, particularly with a firearm. However, domestic violence is a significant problem that affects many women in Serbia. A survey into wife abuse in Serbia found that either weapons or other implements that can inflict grievous bodily harm were used in 7.4% of cases. The research also found that in 15% of cases the perpetrator had participated in 'the war', and that violent acts committed by former combatants are more brutal and include a more frequent use of weapons.<sup>170</sup>

## 5.3 SALW and youth

Data on the impact of SALW on youth is limited. However, in 2003 a Belgrade based NGO, the Balkan Youth Union (BYU), conducted research into young people's attitudes to small arms problems in Belgrade and produced some interesting findings.<sup>171</sup> The experience of youth in Belgrade is of particular interest since the Serbia household survey indicated that young people from Belgrade are more likely to consider their area to be dangerous when compared to other parts of the country.

According to BYU findings, youth in Belgrade have a high level of experience with firearms. Fifty eight percent of those interviewed claimed to have held a firearm at least once (only 29% of boys claimed they had never held a firearm, as opposed to 48% of girls). Amongst those who had held a firearm 31% found it interesting and 7% said they had enjoyed it and had fired. Twenty-four percent of respondents said they knew of someone who had been killed by a firearm and 17% said they knew of someone who had been injured in a SALW related incident. Thirty-seven percent stated that they knew of someone in their neighbourhood who had been threatened by a gun. Sixteen percent of respondents knew of someone who had brought arms to school, but in only 2% of cases had this person been reprimanded.

<sup>170</sup> Copic, 2004.

<sup>171</sup> Op cit, Balkan Youth Union.





The majority of respondents in the BYU survey felt that there were too many firearms in Belgrade and just under two thirds of respondents thought there was some possibility of being hurt in public places.

### Box 3: Some perceptions of young people in Belgrade

*"I used to live in Knin, and it is absolutely normal there that youngsters, who are 15 or so years old, play Russian roulette"* Teenage boy, focus group discussion, Belgrade

*"I was walking down the Danube quay when some mobster was killed. I saw the body"* Teenage girl, focus group discussion, Belgrade

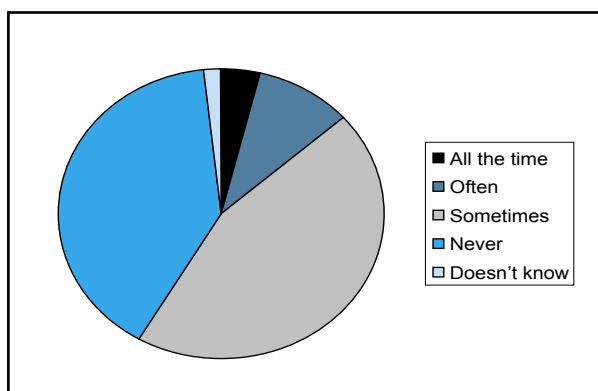
*"I knew a young boy who faked the robbery of his flat in order to steal his father's pistol (his father was a police inspector), he needed the pistol to 'do the work'"* Football fan, focus group discussion, Belgrade



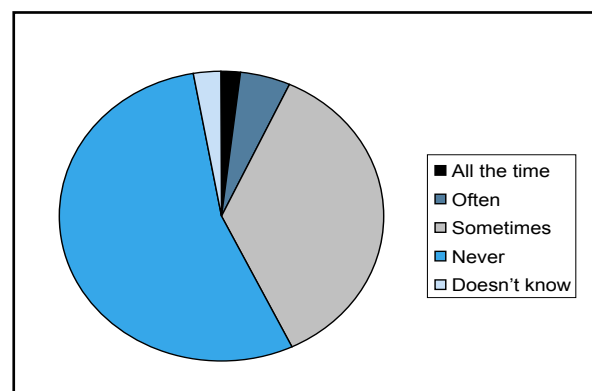
Two children pose for the camera with toy firearms

## 5.4 SALW and human security

Although the large majority of respondents in the household survey thought there were too many firearms in Serbian society, responses to questions relating to their impact appear to illustrate that SALW do not overly affect the average Serbian citizen. The greater proportion of respondents did not consider the availability or use of SALW to be a major concern to the place in which they live and respondents were much more likely never to worry, or only to worry sometimes, about being either killed or injured by firearms (see Figures 10 and 11). More detailed analysis did reveal, however, that people from large towns or cities are more likely to be concerned by SALW than those living in villages or rural areas.



Slika 10: How often do you worry (fear) that either you or someone close to you might be injured with firearms?



Slika 11: How often do you worry (fear) that either you or someone close to you might be killed with firearms?

Findings from the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews go some way to reconciling the proliferation of weapons in society with the relatively low levels of concern as to their impact. It is generally considered that most firearms are kept for protection of the family and property and are only used if there is a legitimate cause. Unless a person is directly threatened, people are very unlikely to use their firearms. The dangers of this situation can be seen in southern Serbia: The belief that one community (Albanian) possesses a large number of weapons, combined with a lack of trust in state structures to provide adequate levels of security, leads the other community (Serbian) to keep a large number of weapons to protect itself. This in turn results in greater overall feelings of tension and could lead to a situation in which firearms possession spirals out of control with the potential for firearms related incidents greatly increased. This view was supported by Professor



Dragan Popadic from the Belgrade University Faculty of Philosophy who informed researchers of psychological studies demonstrating that the presence of weapons within sight stimulates aggressive behaviour and serves as a trigger for violence.<sup>172</sup>

#### Box 4: Attitudes towards firearm possession

*“Gun possession is not a problem because it’s regulated by law and people don’t have a great need for guns because they feel safe. If they have one, it is for their own safety, not to abuse it”* **Border police/customs, semi-structured interview, Subotica**

*“The problem is that one nationality’s knowledge that the other possesses guns causes mistrust and a need for getting armed”* **Municipal police, semi-structured interview, Vranje**

*“There are no incidents connected with the use of weapons or they are very rare and a consequence of negligence or irresponsibility”* **Community leader, semi-structured interview, Subotica**

*“Because Albanians still possess illegal weapons, Serbs don’t feel safe and so they are also acquiring illegal weapons”* **Spediteri, semi-structured interview, Vranje**

*“Based on analyses of recent events, guns have been used the least in incidents”* **Community leader, semi-structured interview, Subotica**

## 5.5 Economic impact

During the course of the research, connections were frequently made between SALW proliferation and the economy. In general, however, most saw economic processes impacting on levels of firearm ownership rather than vice versa. According to this view, general security is dependent on the economy – the stronger the economy, the greater the feelings of security. This suggests that SALW are perceived by many to be a symptom of the economic situation rather than the cause.

Few sources saw a direct link between development and SALW. In answer to the question “Do you think the proliferation of firearms affects economic development and the standard of living?” over half the respondents in the household survey answered that it has no influence at all. Less than a third thought that it decreases development prospects and the overall standard of living. This finding was very similar to that of the South Serbia Survey,<sup>173</sup> conducted in 2003, and was further supported by focus group conclusions. Participants felt that in undeveloped societies there are more weapons because citizens resort to illegal activities in order to cope with unfavourable economic conditions, although a few also believed that in rich societies citizens possess more weapons because they can afford them.

#### Box 5: SALW and Development

*“People used to keep guns to feel safe, because the situation was terrible, I mean economically, socially and politically. Then you had criminals and gang members living better than everyone else so this was a very negative connection. Now you have an improved security situation and the start of other economic and political improvements. There is a direct connection between the economic and political stability and the use of arms”* **Dr Miodrag Starcevic and Ms Sasha Avram, Red Cross, key informant interview**

*“Guns have no influence on transition, they are the consequence of bad transitional processes”* **Enike Halas, Editor in Chief of Multiradio, key informant interview**

<sup>172</sup> Saferworld interview with Dragan Popadic, Professor Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade University, Belgrade, 22 September 2004.



## 6 Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS)

### 6.1 Perceptions of gun culture

The existence of a 'gun culture' in Serbia is a source of much controversy and heated debate. If such a phenomenon exists it is crucial to understanding the culturally specific reasons for high gun possession in Serbia. Conversely, if such a phenomenon does not exist it is equally important in understanding the other social, political and economic reasons as to why people choose to possess firearms. While this survey cannot offer a definitive 'Yes' or 'No' on this subject it can outline the opinions of sections of the public and informed sources to provide greater insight into the issue.

Those who point to the existence of a gun culture in Serbia focus on the tradition that links personal possession of small arms with personal security, the security of the family and clan.<sup>174</sup> According to this theory, ownership is higher in rural, more remote and mountainous areas such as western Serbia<sup>175</sup> where law enforcement is weakest; and lowest in urban areas and in Vojvodina.<sup>176</sup> Others went further and indicated specific regions as being particularly inclined to a gun culture: "the Morava River is roughly the dividing line."<sup>177</sup> However, very few firearm-owning respondents in the household survey (around 1%) cited tradition as the most important reason for ownership.

While many European countries have long traditions of hunting, fewer have a tradition of weapons-use at ceremonies or celebrations. This tradition seems to pre-date the creation of the nation-state and is, according to some sources, a modern manifestation of an older tradition of possessing knives.<sup>178</sup> Others point to epic Serbian figures such as Karadjordje and comment that "criminals offer themselves as his successor." Several respondents spoke of a tradition of fighting and of soldiering but the same sources felt this was not equitable to holding a gun at home.<sup>179</sup>

Most sources consulted had witnessed the use of firearms at weddings with many reporting that in recent years it had become more exaggerated: "It used to be that maybe one person at a wedding would fire a gun; now it's the father of the groom, the groom, the brother of the groom, the uncle and several other men".<sup>180</sup> Several respondents commented that owning a gun was equitable to affirming manhood. Such a tradition may explain why some felt that there was a "social norm that carrying a gun is not a crime."<sup>181</sup>

A common comment was that guns are a 'status symbol', are 'fashionable' and considered alongside 'jeeps and mobile phones'.<sup>182</sup> As such, respondents felt it was a failure of education and the existence of socio-economic uncertainty that caused high levels of ownership.

Another possible explanation for the high number of weapons in circulation in Serbia is a recently modern phenomenon: the centrality of national defence to the SFRJ. Until 1993 every school child would be taught National Defence Education and Public Safety at school. Such training meant there was a high level of familiarity with weapons, which combined to give citizens a 'healthy respect for guns'.<sup>183</sup> There is a strong legacy of this training in Serbia today, witnessed for example by Serbia's strong national shooting team.<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup> SEESAC, 2002.

<sup>174</sup> Davis, 2001.

<sup>175</sup> Saferworld interview with Zoran Petrovic, Priest, Serbian Orthodox Priest, Ostruznica, 07 September 2004.

<sup>176</sup> Saferworld interview with Enike Halas, Editor in Chief, Multiradio, Novi Sad, 10 September 2004.

<sup>177</sup> Op cit Petrovic.

<sup>178</sup> Saferworld interview with Vladimir Djumic, President, Balkan Youth Union Belgrade, 10 September 2004.

<sup>179</sup> Op cit Barovic.

<sup>180</sup> Op cit Djumic.

<sup>181</sup> Op cit Popadic.

<sup>182</sup> Op cit Bilandzic.

<sup>183</sup> Op cit Djumic.

<sup>184</sup> Jasna Sekaric won silver in the women's 10m air pistol event.



The impact of war and violence clearly causes individual and group insecurity and in this context, weapons provide a means for compensating for the lack of trust in the state. Measuring the degree that this applies to Serbia today is difficult, but it is reasonable to suggest that weapons continue to be found in those parts of Serbia where tensions are highest.

## 6.2 Perceptions of human security

### 6.2.1 Community perceptions

In order to gauge public perceptions and attitudes towards SALW in Serbia, it is useful to look at the wider context of everyday life and general perceptions of security. Most respondents in the Serbia SALW household survey and the focus groups identified economic problems as being the most pressing in Serbia today, both at the individual and the community level. For example, 47% of respondents perceived economic uncertainty as being the biggest cause of personal or family insecurity and almost three quarters of respondents in the survey identified unemployment as being one of the worst problems currently facing their community. The other main problems were low incomes (54%), poor facilities for young people (33%) and corruption (28%). Only 2.2% of respondents highlighted problems related to the proliferation, handling and illegal possession of arms as being of concern to the community, although it is interesting to note that in comparison with other groups, affluent respondents and those living in large cities are significantly more likely to identify arms related issues as being one of the worst problems facing the community.

Those aged over 65 are more likely to see violence as being the biggest cause of personal or family insecurity. From the focus groups it emerged that an additional factor affects feelings of personal security in southern Serbia, this being the proximity to the border with Kosovo and the corresponding fear that the Serbian population could be pressured into leaving the area. This fear is heightened by the feeling of being neglected by the state and by the very low prospects for the economic and political development of the area.

#### **Box 6: The 3 main problems facing communities in Serbia today:**

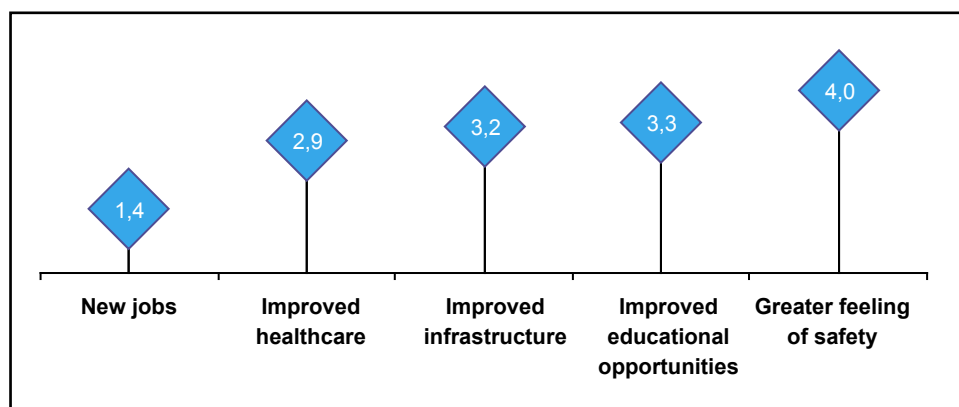
1. The economy
2. Poor facilities for the young
3. Corruption

*“Poverty causes all other problems”, Focus group participant, Belgrade*

The focus groups identified the low standard of living and unemployment as the root of most problems in Serbia, although some interesting responses were encountered which were not foreseen in the survey questionnaire. A number of respondents saw the change in value systems as a problem. For example, the breakdown of the traditional family model suggests that parents have less time to spend with their children, and in a culture where the individual is becoming more important than the community, this means that young people do what they want and are not answerable to anyone, particularly if laws are not properly enforced. A number of focus group participants also claimed that people have decreasing levels of patience today

and are more likely to lose their temper. In these circumstances, access to weapons suggests that the likelihood of arguments being settled with guns is increased.

Given these concerns, it is not surprising that when asked to rank the factors that could most improve the quality of life in the community, basic needs than improved security were identified (see figure 12). New jobs were widely considered to be the most important factor followed by improved healthcare, improved infrastructure, improved education opportunities and lastly a greater feeling of safety. However, compared to those living in villages and rural regions, respondents in Belgrade regard increased safety as being more important.



**Figure 12: “What could improve the quality of life in your community” (Rank in order of importance 1 – the most important factor, 5 – the least important factor)**

That security seems to be of low concern to respondents can be explained by the fact that the large majority of respondents generally do not feel threatened. From the questionnaire, 87% of respondents feel safe living and working in their communities, 75% feel either completely or fairly safe when walking home after dark, 91% feel safe at home after dark and most respondents feel their communities are safer compared to others. When looking at perceptions of security, in general, greater levels of insecurity are felt by young people and those living in large urban areas than those living in rural regions and villages; however, young people and those from urban areas are also more likely to view levels of security as improving. On the whole, security levels are considered to have remained stable over the last two years, although almost a quarter of respondents consider them to have improved during this period. The majority of respondents feel that their area is safer than, or at least as safe as, other areas in Serbia; however young people (aged between 18 and 29 years) and people from Belgrade are more likely to think that their area is more dangerous.



**An elderly woman hurries past an ammunition stockpile location**

#### **Box 7: Community perceptions of security**

- The majority of respondents feel safe in their communities
- People from Belgrade feel less safe than those in rural areas
- Levels of crime involving SALW are generally considered to be remaining stable, or even decreasing

*“Of course, you always have some incidents. But we still live in a quiet and safe town”* **Focus group participant, Vranje**

*“One can hardly feel safe. When I take a walk on Kalemegdan, I hide my mobile phone”* **Focus group participant, Belgrade**

*“I even keep my door unlocked at night”* **Focus group participant, Vranje**

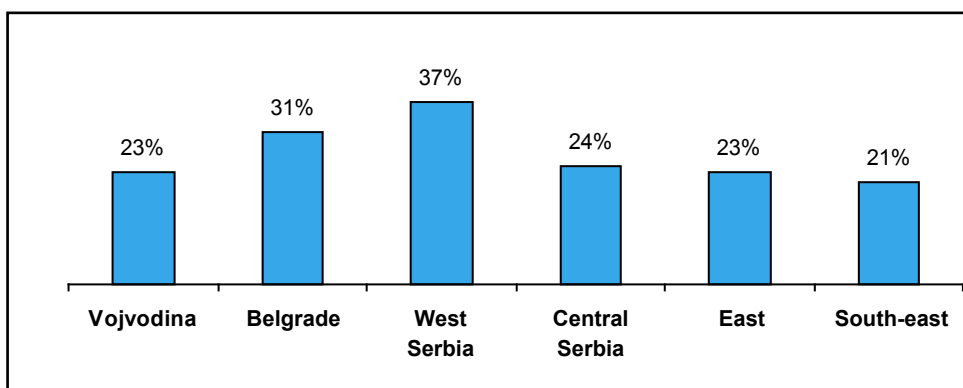
Perceptions of security were explored further during focus group discussions and in semi-structured interviews. Reasons given for increased feelings of security were the end of the war and political changes since October 2000. Although some participants mentioned that people who had fled from conflict are now finding it difficult to cope and are sometimes turning to various forms of crime, they do not feel this has a large impact on security.

Focus group participants in Belgrade presented a different picture. When assessing their security today as compared to the past, they frequently singled out three periods – Serbia during the 1990s when security was at its lowest level; the period from 2000 until the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic which was considered to be relatively safe; and finally the past year and a half, during which violence and crime have increased. Belgrade was considered to be the stronghold of crime in the country and participants took the view that security is better in the North of the country. In border areas, many of the semi-structured

interview sources felt that insecurity was increased by smuggling and other criminal activities, as well as the remaining impact of past conflicts.



When asked which three crimes occur most often in their area, 16% of respondents answered that there were no crimes at all. Otherwise, the three most commonly occurring crimes identified were fights, burglaries and drunken disorder. The majority of respondents in the survey believe that both street crime and organised crime have either remained at the same level during the past two years or have actually decreased, particularly in Belgrade. This opinion was contradicted during focus group discussions however, as participants felt that light crimes are actually more frequent than in the former Yugoslavia and that all types of crime have risen in Belgrade.

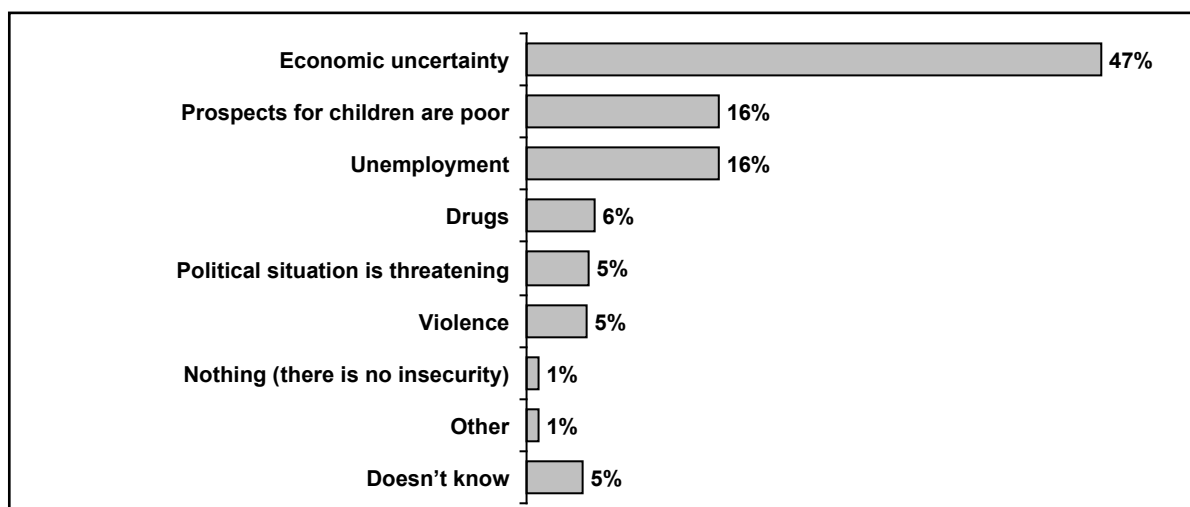


**Figure 13: How do you think the number of crimes using SALW has changed in the last three years? (Percentage of population answering 'falling a lot' or 'falling')**

The demand for defensive types of firearms, especially handguns and short barrel shotguns, rises with public fears (real or imagined) of violent crime. The public consulted in this survey reveal that fear of violent crime is relatively low (behind drugs, unemployment, prospects for youth and economic uncertainty), which could support the assertion that the demand for firearms is stable or decreasing.

In answer to a question on perceptions of changes in numbers of crimes using SALW over the last three years, slightly fewer than half the respondents believe that numbers have remained the same, while 26% thought that crimes using SALW were decreasing and another 20% thought numbers were rising. Women were more likely than men to think that the number of crimes is rising, as were Serbian respondents when compared with respondents from other nationalities. Differences could also be noted in different regions of Serbia, as illustrated in Figure 13..

## 6.2.2 Individual perceptions



**Figure 14: Main concerns of individuals**





At the individual level, the major concerns were similar to those felt at the community level (see Figure 14). Ninety-one percent of respondents feel that levels of their own personal security have either improved or remained the same during the past two years with no significant differences between nationalities or sexes, although feelings of security have improved most markedly in larger cities. Burglaries, fighting and drug dealing are considered to be the three types of violence that are the biggest cause of insecurity to the individual or their family; however, two thirds of respondents are not afraid of becoming a victim of crime. Ten percent of respondents replied that they had been affected by crime in the past two years, most of these were victims of burglaries, petty theft or vehicle related theft. In general no violence was used during the crimes, but in the cases when violence did occur, it mostly took the form of physical threats, although firearms were noted in 5% of cases.

**Box 8: Main 3 types of violence concerning individuals:**

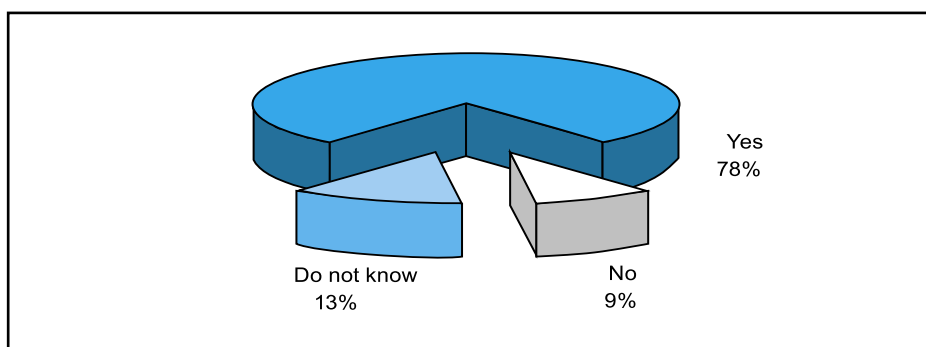
1. Burglaries
2. Fighting
3. Distribution and sale of drugs

*"I believe it's much safer in smaller places. People know each other there"* **Focus group participant, Belgrade**

Few respondents often worry that either they themselves or someone close might be injured with firearms (10%), while 40% never worry that this might occur and 45% sometimes worry. Respondents are even less likely to be worried about being killed by firearms. Only 5% claim they often fear this, whereas 55% never worry about being killed by firearms. Respondents in rural areas are more likely never to worry about either death or injury from firearms than respondents from large cities.

### 6.3 Perceptions of SALW proliferation

From the results of the household questionnaire, it does not appear that respondents make an automatic link between the proliferation of arms and levels of security, and security issues in general do not seem to be of great concern. Furthermore, when asked whether the availability or use of SALW is a major concern to the area in which they live, 29% of respondents strongly disagreed, as opposed to the 10% who strongly agreed. On the other hand, 78% of respondents felt that there are too many firearms in Serbian society (see Figure 15).



**Figure 15: Do you think there are too many firearms in Serbian society?**

Most focus group participants believe that one of the major consequences of the wars of the 1990s has been the proliferation of weapons in society. These were brought into Serbia either by refugees or by former combatants, and many people felt the need to arm themselves because of feelings of insecurity. When asked how widespread firearms are in society, 78% of respondents stated that many people own firearms, and there was an equal split between those who believe that virtually everyone owns firearms and those that believe that only a few people own them (both 7%). However, regarding perceptions of proliferation at the community level, respondents were much more conservative in their estimations of gun ownership. The percentage of respondents thinking that many people owned firearms dropped to 48%, whereas the percentage of respondents thinking that a few people own firearms increased to 29%. There are two possible explanations for this: either people overestimate the number of weapons that are in society, or they could be reluctant to reveal the reality regarding firearm proliferation in their own communities. While it is difficult to speculate which of these positions is more accurate, it should be noted that respondents were slightly more likely to answer, 'Don't know' or 'refuse to say' when





asked about proliferation at the community level than at the society level. Another indication of the lack of substantiated knowledge of levels of proliferation is presented in answers to the question related to changes in the level of firearms ownership in the last three years. Although 33% of respondents answered that the number of firearms owners had remained about the same, 50% of respondents claimed they did not know whether numbers had changed.

When asked to identify up to three groups in society in which firearms are most abundant, 87% of respondents chose criminal groups. 38% chose former security officers and 26% chose private security companies (see Box 9). Firearms were considered to be more abundant in households than in the possession of businessmen and politicians (24% against 21% and 18% respectively). When looking at ages of people most likely to possess firearms, most respondents thought they were in the hands of people aged between 26 and 50 years of age. 14% of respondents thought that people aged 19–25 years are likely to own firearms (people aged 18–29 years were more likely to give this answer than respondents in any other age group). Almost a quarter of respondents apparently do not know which age group is most likely to possess firearms. The proportion of respondents thinking more firearms in private possession are unlicensed is greater than those thinking that more are licensed (44.5% against 22.5%).

#### Box 9: Perceptions of SALW proliferation

- Over three quarters of respondents think that there are too many firearms in Serbian society
- Firearms are considered to be most abundant in the hands of:
  1. Criminals
  2. Former security officers
  3. Private security firms
- The proportion of participants who think that think more weapons are kept illegally is twice that of those that think more weapons are kept legally
- Of those respondents that have witnessed the use of firearms, in the majority of cases this occurred at celebrations
- The most common type of firearms witnessed in use was pistols or revolvers
- None of the focus group participants said they would contact the police if they heard shooting

Despite the perceived proliferation of weapons, focus group participants stated that people do not openly carry arms in the same way as they used to, primarily because of the law on possession. Just over half of respondents (52%) claim they have never personally witnessed the use of firearms. Men and those aged 30–39 years are significantly more likely to have observed firearms use at first hand, whereas pensioners, other nationalities and those living in the south east are less likely to have been witnesses. Most respondents who had witnessed the use of firearms (see Figure 16) saw them at celebrations (83%) or during hunting (35%). Very few had seen them used during incidents of public disorder or in criminal acts. In 84% of cases, respondents answered that they had seen a pistol or revolver being used, in 47% of cases a hunting rifle was being used and in 14% of cases an AK-47 was witnessed. All focus group participants claimed to have heard firearm shots, predominantly during celebrations, although participants in Vranje also heard shots occurring in nearby hills. None of the participants said they would contact the police if they heard shooting.

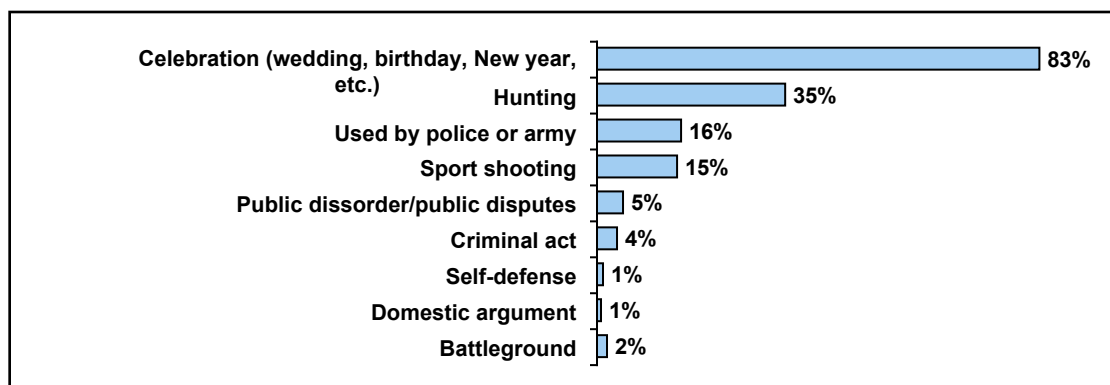


Figure 16: In which situation did you witness the use of firearms, either the actual use or only a threat with firearms?



When asked where in general people other than police or army officers are most likely to be seen carrying firearms, under a third of respondents replied that they cannot be seen anywhere; however, 30% said they could be seen at celebrations and 9% said that they could be seen in bars and clubs. Five percent of respondents said firearms could be seen everywhere. Affluent people and those aged 18–29 years are more likely to see people carrying weapons in bars and nightclubs, whereas other nationalities are less likely to see firearms at celebrations. Sightings of weapons in public places are relatively uncommon – 52% of respondents claim they never see firearms, while 29% see them less than once a month.

#### Box 10: The human impact of celebratory shooting

*“On my engagement celebration, my future father in law, who was drunk, went out to the terrace and started shooting from his pistol. He thought that there were no more bullets, and, at one instance he joked and pointed to his head. There was one more bullet that killed him, but the ricocheted bullet killed my brother, who stood by my father in law. I have nothing to add to this topic of shooting” Focus group participant, Belgrade*

Two interesting points can be made about perceptions of proliferation. Firstly, affluent people appear to be more concerned about the proliferation of firearms. They are more likely than other groups to think that firearms are a concern to their community and also more likely to believe that virtually everyone owns firearms. Secondly, there are marked geographical differences in perceptions on proliferation. While there is a widely held perception that gun ownership is prolific in the southeast, respondents from this area do not feel the proliferation of weapons is a significant problem. They are less likely to consider weapons to be widespread either within society in general or within their own communities and they are less likely to say that they have personally witnessed firearms use. On the other hand, participants in the Vranje focus groups connected possession of weapons with purchasing power and therefore felt that households in central Serbia were more likely to possess greater numbers of firearms. Respondents from eastern Serbia were more likely to consider weapons to be widespread within their community and also more likely to consider that firearms are abundant in households in their area.



A billboard for the ‘Celebrate without Weapons’ campaign designed to discourage the celebratory shooting of firearms during the Christmas and New Year period

## 6.4 Perceptions of possession and ownership

#### Box 11: Perceptions on possession

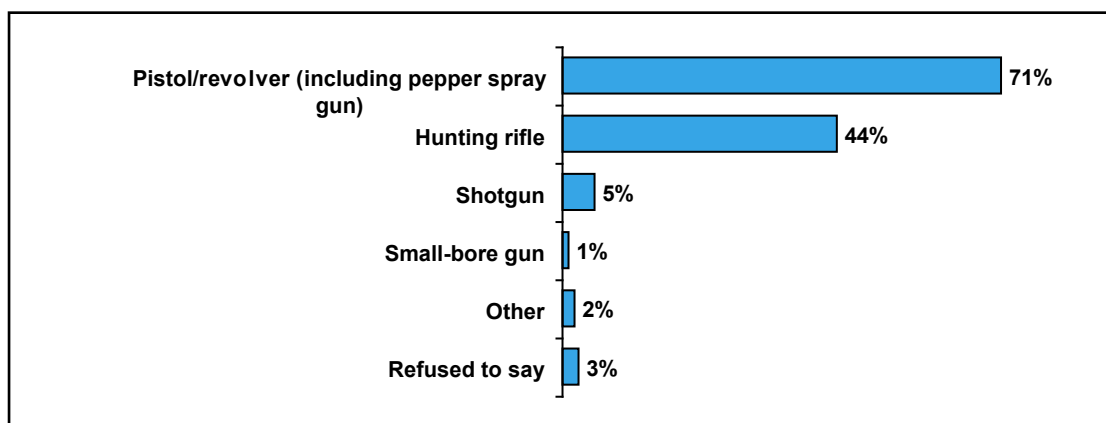
- Two thirds of participants would not chose to own a firearm if they could do so legally
- 79% of respondents claimed they did not own a firearm
- 3 main reasons why people own firearms
  - Personal protection
  - Hunting or sports shooting
  - Protection of property or business
- Of those participants that own a firearm, most have a pistol or revolver
- Half the respondents believed that people own firearms illegally because of the licensing procedure

*“If someone wants to have a pistol, he will get it, no matter how”,*  
**Focus group participant, Belgrade**

In order to be able to ask respondents whether they possessed any firearms, they were first asked to answer more general questions on firearms possession. An example is the question asking who should legally be allowed to keep firearms at home, excluding the police and army employees (answers for this question are detailed below). Another question asked whether the respondent or other members of their household would choose to own a firearm legally if they could do. Sixty-five percent of respondents replied no to this question, although men were more likely to answer yes than women, and those in a poor financial situation were less likely to answer yes than other groups. Finally respondents



were asked whether either they themselves or a member of their household own a firearm. Often this question can provoke high levels of non-response, however in this case only 1% refused to give an answer. Altogether 79% of respondents replied that they did not own a gun. Men, respondents from eastern Serbia and respondents from rural areas were more likely to answer positively to this question, while respondents in a poor financial situation and those in the south east were more likely to answer negatively. The average number of weapons owned by a household was 1.5 (although this figure was higher amongst professionals and respondents from eastern Serbia – 2 and 1.9 respectively) and the most commonly owned firearms were pistol/revolvers (71%) and hunting rifles (see Figure 17).



**Figure 17: What types of firearms do you or a member of your household own?**

A number of questions were asked to examine the reasons why people choose to own firearms. Although 51% of respondents believe that possessing firearms makes no difference to a person's safety and 21% believe that firearms possession actually makes a person less safe, the most frequent answer to all questions asking why people possess weapons is that they are kept for personal protection. When asked the main reasons for people in general to possess weapons, respondents felt the second most significant purpose was to protect property (40%), the third was for sports shooting or hunting and the fourth was for self-confidence (26%). Fairly similar reasons were given by firearms owners. While 56% gave protection of self and family as a reason, 40% own weapons for hunting or sports shooting, 32% own weapons to protect their property or business and 31% have a firearm as a family heirloom. Thirty-four percent of respondents refused to say why they own weapons. Participants from the Belgrade focus group also pointed out that possession of weapons is becoming more socially acceptable, due to factors such as increased coverage of violence in the media, production of toys stimulating aggressive behaviour in children and increased tolerance of violent behaviour by the state.

When asked why people would not possess firearms, the main reason given was that people do not like guns (48%); this was followed by the perception that it is dangerous for the family, particularly children, if they are kept in the house (20%); and 18% replied that the main reason for not owning a firearm is because they do not need one.

While key informants cited the expense of owning a firearm as one reason why people do not register them, only 1% of respondents to the household survey answered that cost prohibited them from obtaining a licence. When asked why people choose to possess firearms illegally (see Figure 18), 49% of respondents selected answers related to the licensing procedure, while 34% thought that people did not want to be recorded as firearms owners. The majority of focus group participants thought that the procedure for obtaining a firearms licence is complicated and participants who considered themselves more informed asserted that it is almost impossible to get a permit under the new regulations. Other reasons were also given by participants in the focus groups. Some pointed out that annual tax for the possession of firearms is extremely high, leading people to keep firearms illegally, while others felt that there were so few raids and confiscations by police that there was no incentive to register a firearm.

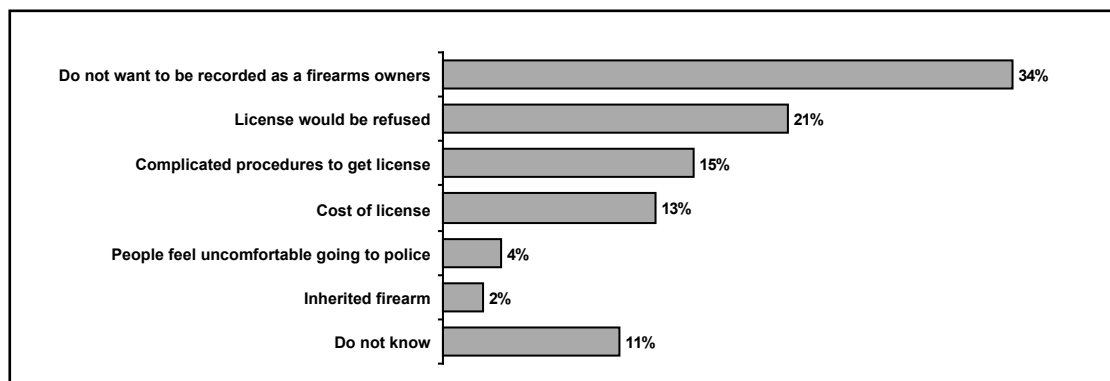


Figure 18: In your opinion why do people choose to illegally possess guns?

## 6.5 Perceptions of security providers

Respondents to the survey consider police to have the greatest responsibility for their security (see Figure 19); however they trust the police less to fulfil this duty than they do the special police, the army, common citizens living in the area and private security companies. The police are also considered to be less efficient than the army in solving crime and protecting society from violence. While many municipality policemen interviewed felt that trust in the police had grown since the end of the Milosevic regime, during focus group discussions participants mentioned that corruption, perceived connections between the police and the mafia, and lack of competence are the main reasons why the police are mistrusted.

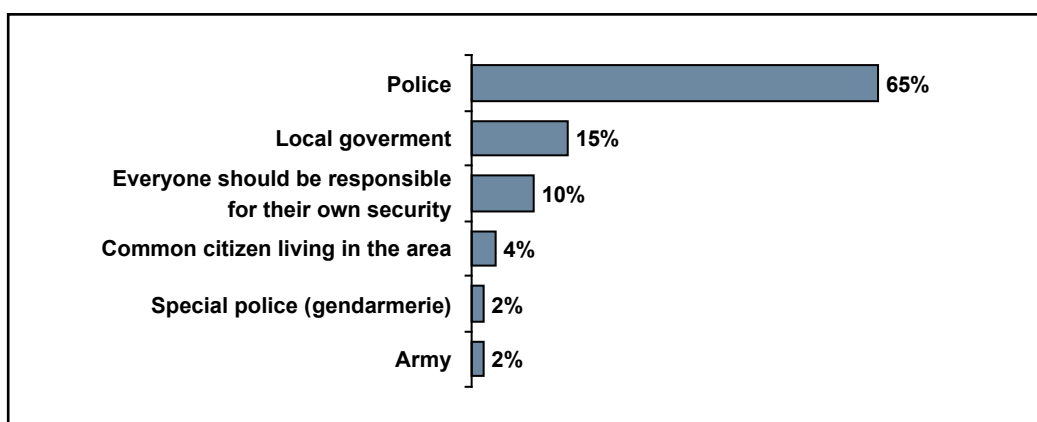


Figure 19: Who do you consider the most responsible for the security of you and your family?

Evidence of a link between levels of trust and perceptions of effectiveness was also demonstrated by answers given by victims of crime. Sixteen percent of respondents would not go to the police if a crime took place and out of those victims that did call the police to report a crime, only 16% reported the case had been solved. In 22% of cases the crime was not solved and 30% of respondents replied that the crime was still being investigated. Focus group participants claimed that there were cases where the police had been called and they acted in a disinterested and inefficient manner.



## Box 12: Citizens and Police

### Citizens and the police

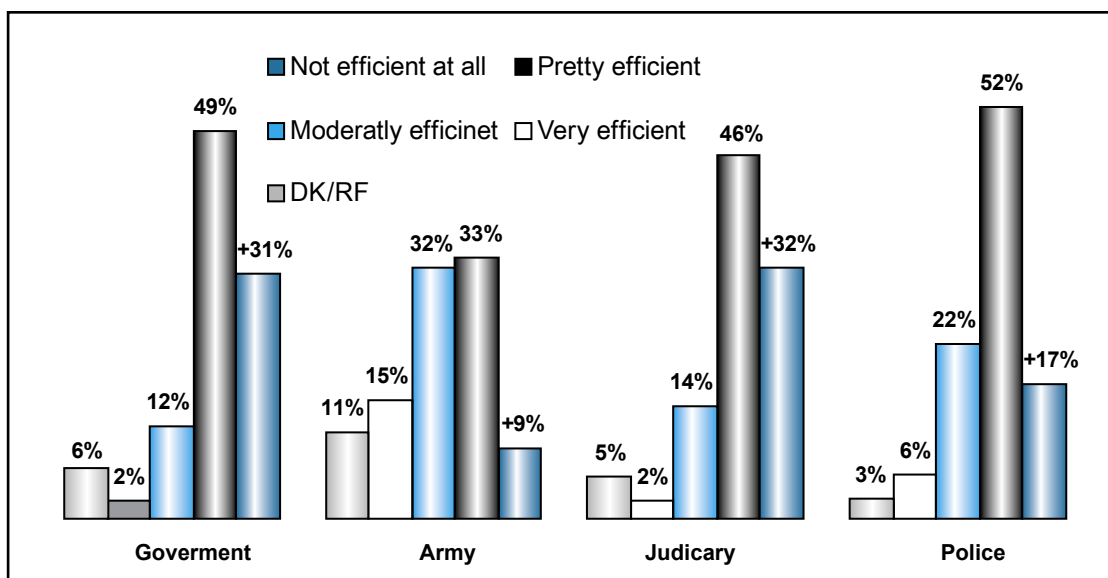
- Police are considered to be the prime providers of security
- Police are less trusted than the army, the special police and private security companies
- 3 main reasons why the police are not trusted
  1. Corruption
  2. Connections with the mafia
  3. Lack of competence

*“And why do you think it is that I want to possess firearms in the first place? Why do I have to protect myself? Whose job is this?”* **Focus group participant, Belgrade**

*“Time is required for people to have confidence again. How can we trust the police if the main person there used to do kiosks himself”* **Focus group participant, Belgrade**

*“No we didn’t call them because we didn’t think they would or could help”* **Focus group participant, Subotica**

The percentage of victims of crime in Belgrade was above the average figure and the citizens of Belgrade are less likely to be satisfied by the work of the police. Those living in rural areas and in southeastern Serbia are more likely to respond that the police are ‘pretty efficient’. While there is little difference in perceptions of police effectiveness between different nationalities, non-Serbs are less likely to consider the army as being effective or even answer this question and people from Vojvodina are less likely to have a good impression of the army than people from the southeast. Approximately half the respondents view the government as being moderately efficient in providing security.



**Figure 20: How efficient do you judge the following to be in solving crime and protecting people and society from violent crime?**



## Box 13 Case study: 'The public don't fear the police, the public fear the criminals'.

*"Dragan\* was shot dead in broad daylight in a shopping centre in Belgrade; there were at least 40 witnesses to his murder. The police finally arrested the suspect this April. Everyone knew who he was and where he lived but the cops did nothing for almost a year.*

*Within three months, the number of witnesses willing to testify went from 9 to 1. Three weeks ago, the last witness decided that she had been bribed to testify against the suspect and withdrew her testimony. Because there is no CCTV, and now no witness, the suspect has been released. He's a popular guy, has a public position with responsibility for hundreds of people; he's now more popular than ever.*

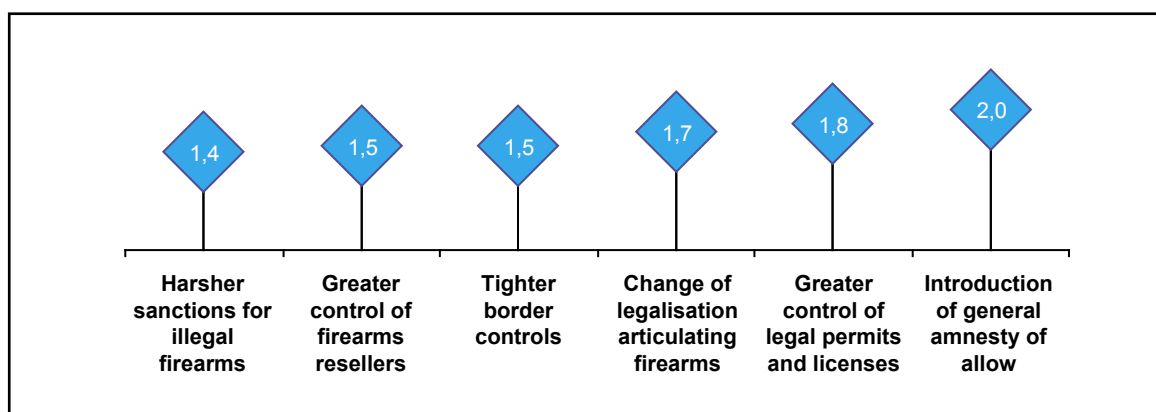
*The public don't fear the police they fear criminals. The police and the judicial system can't guarantee their safety and the criminals can squash them by barely moving. This is the reality and I don't see it changing. The only thing that stops most people committing crimes is their morality and their family, not fear of being punished, at least not by the police"*

Source: Natasha\*, personal testimony

\* All names have been changed

## 6.6 Perceptions of SALW control interventions

In general, respondents ranked tougher sanctions for illegal firearms possession as the main control measure that would increase security in relation to firearms possession (see Figure 21). In a ranking exercise to determine the scale of importance of various control measures, this was followed by greater control of firearms vendors, tighter border controls, change of legislation on firearms possession, greater control of legal permits and licences and lastly the introduction of a general amnesty to allow surrender of illegal firearms without any sanctions. Respondents in west Serbia were more likely to rate tighter border controls as a measure that would increase security significantly, whereas people in the southeast are more likely to consider that a general weapons amnesty would significantly increase security.



**Figure 21: How much do you think each of the following will increase security in Serbia? (Average on 4 point scale of importance 1 – increase security a lot, 4 – increase security a little)**

Most respondents (75%) were aware of a national gun amnesty in Serbia that allowed citizens to return firearms held illegally without any legal consequences. However, respondents over the age of 65 and women were less likely to be aware of gun amnesties. During the focus groups the 2003 amnesty was the most frequently mentioned, although it was referred to under various names – 'the legalisation several years ago', 'the one when they killed Djindjic' or 'the legalisation during "Sabre"'. Some respondents also mentioned remembering other amnesties, which occurred during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Most participants stated that the television was their main source of information on amnesties. From those respondents that were informed about past gun amnesties, an overwhelming majority (81%) were supportive of the amnesty and collection held in 2003



and a further 10% also said that they were supportive of this type of action in general, but not in this particular instance. Respondents in cities were slightly more likely to be against this action, whereas respondents in towns were less likely to oppose it.

#### Box 14: Perceptions of control measures

- Respondents felt that harsher sanctions for possession is the main control measure that would increase security in relation to firearms possession
- Television is the main source of information on weapons amnesties
- Just under half of respondents felt that people did not trust the police enough to hand over weapons during the last amnesty
- Respondents were divided as to how successful a future amnesty would be
- Awareness campaigns are considered to be more effective than amnesties
- Future amnesties might not be effective as the people who still own illegal weapons feel some reason to keep them

*“Even if one pistol were returned, it is good”* **Focus group participant, Vranje**

Although half the respondents considered the amnesty to be partially successful, over a quarter thought that it was not very successful and 6% thought that it was very unsuccessful. Respondents in Vojvodina and the east were more likely to think that the amnesty had been unsuccessful, whereas in the southeast respondents were more positive. A significant proportion of respondents (10%) did not know how successful this amnesty had been. Fear of the police during the state of emergency was the main reason that the amnesty was considered to be a success, although 39% of respondents also thought that the opportunity to surrender a weapon or get a licence legally and without fear of repercussions was a factor motivating people to surrender their weapons.

Focus group participants stated that people surrendered weapons because with the end of warfare, they were no longer needed. The perception that there are still many illegal weapons in Serbia was the main reason that respondents gave in support of the opinion that the amnesty had not been successful, although 45% felt that people did not trust the police enough to hand in weapons and 36% thought that people did not believe that the amnesty would preserve anonymity. From the questionnaire only 1% of respondents, all of non-Serbian ethnicity, felt that the amnesty was unsuccessful because people did not want to give away their weapons, although a reason for this identified during the focus groups was that a number of firearms are in the hands of criminals who do not have an interest in surrendering them.

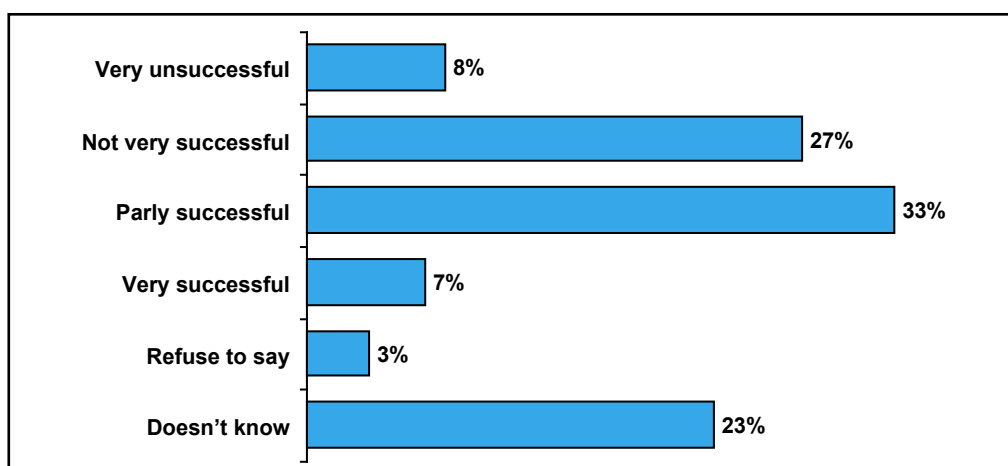


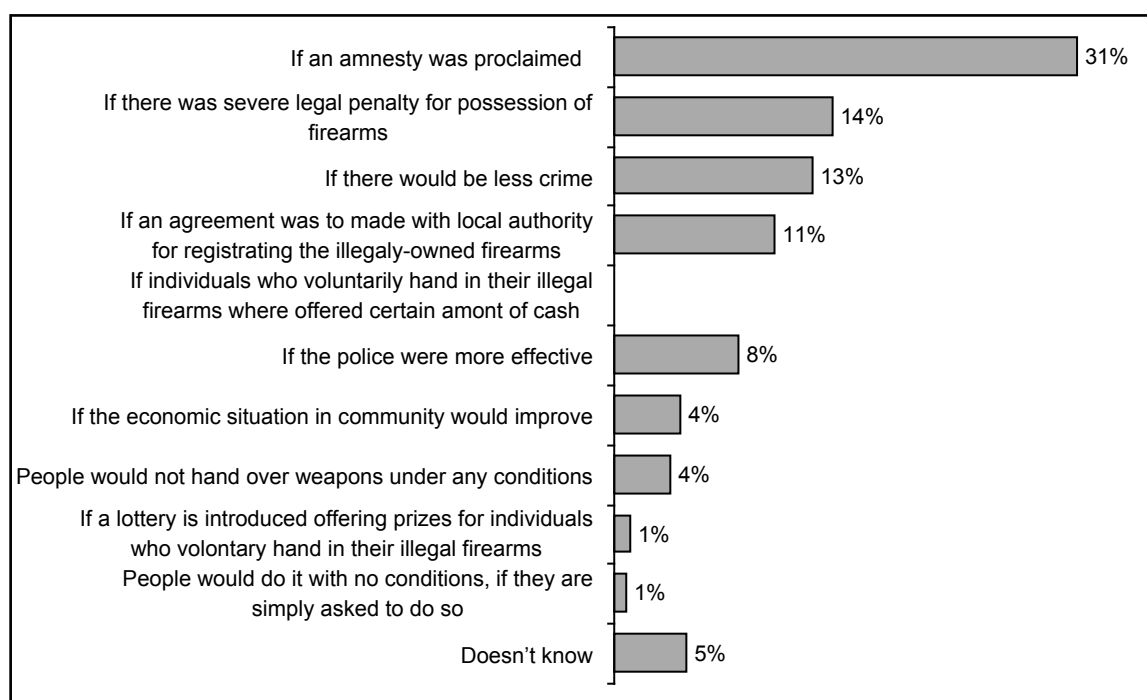
Figure 22: How successful do you think weapons amnesties could be in your community?



When asked about potential future weapons amnesties within the community (see Figure 22), respondents were fairly evenly split as to whether they thought they would be successful or not (33% and 27% respectively). Quite a high percentage of respondents, both male and female, were unable to judge how successful a future amnesty would be. Similar to responses on the success of the 2003 amnesty, respondents in the southeast are more positive about the potential success of amnesties than those in the east. Focus group participants identified reasons for the low estimations of success of future amnesties. Many thought that those people who were in a position to surrender firearms had already taken this opportunity in 2003 whereas the factors that prevented people from handing over weapons at that time still exist - so for example criminals then are still criminals now - and people who felt insecure then still feel insecure in the present. Furthermore, many people are emotionally attached to their firearms, particularly in the case of heirlooms, or need them for either hunting or self-protection.

Rather than developing campaigns to persuade people to surrender weapons, focus group participants thought it would be more effective to run campaigns promoting precautionary measures. For example, participants in the Belgrade focus group felt that although citizens are well informed about security measures when looking after weapons (e.g. firearms should be kept dismantled, they should be kept out of the reach of children, only the owner should know where the firearms are kept), in practice these measures are not being followed.

In a further question, respondents were asked the three main factors that would prompt people to hand in weapons. Figures for the most important factor are contained in Figure 23:



**Figure 23: The most important reason that could stimulate people to hand in the weapons, which they illegally possess**

In a separate question, when asked to choose the three most important factors, the most commonly chosen one was if a weapons amnesty was proclaimed (53%) and the second was if there was a severe legal penalty for possession of firearms (43%); however, in this case 40% of respondents replied that people would hand in their weapons if the police were more effective.

Economic factors do not appear to be an important motivation for people to hand in their weapons – 28% of respondents said that people would hand in illegal firearms for cash, 23% said that improvement in the economic situation of the community would be a stimulus and 11% said that weapons would be handed in if a lottery was introduced that offered prizes in exchange for illegal weapons. Once again the scepticism of respondents in the east is reflected in the fact that this group was significantly more likely to answer that people would not surrender



weapons under any circumstances. In a further question to discover factors that would encourage people to surrender illegal weapons, respondents were asked how likely they thought it would be that weapons would be handed over in exchange for community development projects in the municipality. Just under half thought that this would be either somewhat or very unlikely (18% or 30% respectively), while only 5% thought it would be very likely.

Respondents did not feel that a lottery with prizes in exchange for weapons would be very successful but if one were to be organised, the most popular overall prize would be a new, west European brand car (34%), followed by a scholarship for two of the winner's children (13%). Other prizes such as a new set of household furniture, new kitchen appliances, computer or foreign languages lessons and a new stereo, DVD player and TV were less popular.

#### **Box 15: Incentives for handing over firearms**

- Economic incentives do not provide a large motivation for people to hand over their weapons
- Weapons in exchange for development programmes are not perceived to be a great motivation to hand over firearms
- In the case of a lottery, the most popular prize would be a new, west European brand car
- The police are best placed to motivate people to hand over firearms

Focus group participants gave several suggestions on how weapons amnesties could be improved in the future. Ideas included:

- An all inclusive media campaign through TV, radio, billboards, brochures, etc
- As many programmes on TV as possible presenting tragic stories involving firearms incidents
- Campaigns that are carefully designed and targeted to certain behaviour
- Support of well-known public figures
- Destruction of weapons in public places
- Co-operation of official institutions (political parties, republic and local level actors) and the presentation of a unified message on the importance of such an action
- Public assurances by the police and Minister of Police that people handing over weapons will not be punished for illegal possession
- Limitation on sales of ammunition
- Education in schools on use of firearms and violent behaviour
- Participation of trustworthy NGOs in awareness campaign
- Incentives for citizens to report information on neighbours that use firearms

Despite the fact that lack of trust in the police has been a recurring theme in answers to a variety of questions in the survey, if a programme against firearms proliferation and misuse was developed, over two thirds of respondents replied that the police would be best placed to mobilise members of the community to participate. The government and the army are considered to be the next best placed institutions to mobilise people, although non-Serb respondents are less likely to answer that the army would. NGOs and international organisations would not be very effective in mobilising the community, as both were only selected by 2% of respondents. If this programme were to take the form of a voluntary firearms collection initiative, the police are considered to be the most acceptable collectors, followed by the Ministry of Interior and then the Army, although non-Serb ethnicities would find the local government more acceptable than both of these options.

## 6.7 Attitudes towards production and export of arms

Over 80% of respondents are aware that Serbia manufactures firearms and military equipment, and most respondents (89%) think that domestic production is necessary for Serbia. This appears to be linked primarily to a feeling of national pride, since 42% of respondents thought it was necessary for Serbia to have its own sources of equipment, whereas only 21% thought that it was necessary for economic reasons. Just over two thirds of the respondents think it is positive that Serbia exports arms to foreign countries – and within this group only one quarter think that the government should prevent arms being sold to countries with non-democratic, repressive regimes. On the other hand, three quarters of these respondents think that arms should not be exported to countries that support terrorism. In relation to surplus weapons, 31% of respondents think that they should be exported, although the majority (55%) thinks that surplus weapons should be destroyed.

A difference is evident in the answers given by men and women to the questions on production and export of arms. Women are more likely to answer “don’t know” and are significantly more likely to think that it is important for Serbia to have its own production and significantly less likely to think that it is positive to export arms to foreign countries.



## 7 Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS)

### 7.1 Government policy and practice

The government of Serbia has taken a number of steps to increase its capacity to control SALW and related threats. The last three years have witnessed a series of initiatives and reforms designed to decentralise and increase the state's operational capacity in the following areas:

**Criminal intelligence capacity:** Notable developments in criminal intelligence have included a reorganisation of the much-criticised State Security Service into the Security and Intelligence Agency (BIA), an independent body for gathering and analysing intelligence, and the secondment of a Serbian police officer to the regional intelligence body charged with combating organised crime, the Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) for Combating Trans-border Crime.

**Law enforcement capacity:** Reforms to law enforcement have also been notable. The last three years have seen the creation of a multi-ethnic police force in southern Serbia to deal with the difficulties of armed insurgency and mutual distrust; the appointment of a special prosecutor for combating organised crime; and the creation of an elite anti-terrorist force designed to tackle (amongst other things) weapons trafficking.

**Armed forces capacity:** Enhancing the operational capacity of the armed forces is critical to the stability of the country and the security of stockpiles. Maintaining the morale of the armed forces is made particularly difficult given that the military was once so powerful that it was described as a "state within a state".<sup>185</sup> Today most of its air force is grounded due to fuel shortages, its army use 25-year-old equipment and there is a crisis over accommodation for military personnel. Despite these challenges, defence reform has already succeeded in streamlining the command structure, recruiting new non-commissioned officers, reducing personnel numbers and initiating a 'resettlement'<sup>186</sup> programme. These changes were crystallised by the successful passage through parliament, in November 2004, of the Defence Strategy, an overarching document that outlines the future of the reform process.

**Structural effectiveness:** Within government, important steps have been taken to improve the level of command the state is able to extend over its respective agencies through bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Council, designed to empower institutions to work effectively; and the formation of a National Focal Point on SALW responsible for co-ordinating policy and action across ministries.

**International commitments:** Internationally, the government has joined various multi-lateral bodies and signed commitments that should – if properly implemented – significantly increase its capacity to tackle the causes and symptoms of SALW-related problems.

Arms or SALW control agreement	Date acceded
Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan	November 2001
UN Programme of Action	July 2001
UN Firearms Protocol	-
OSCE Document on Small Arms	November 2000
OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition	December 2003
EU Joint Action on SALW	-

**Table 16: Serbia and Montenegro's commitments to arms or SALW control agreements<sup>187</sup>**

<sup>185</sup> Saferworld interview with Major General Graham Holland (ret'd), Change Management Advisor UNDP, Belgrade, 09 September 2004.

<sup>186</sup> The process of reintegrating military personnel into civilian life.

<sup>187</sup> Op cit Hirst and Mariani.



**Legislative and regulatory capacity:** Over the past year, legal controls on SALW have been significantly strengthened. Most important has been the adoption of the law on Foreign Trade in Weapons, Military Equipment and Dual-Use Goods. There are, however, other areas such as the regulation of private security companies and a new police law which would further aid the capacity of the state to effectively control SALW.

## 7.2 Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks

There are several provisions relevant to SALW control. These include the Law on Foreign Trade in Weapons, Military Equipment and Dual-Use Goods (2005) and the Law on Weapons and Ammunition (1992, amended in 1998), which regulates civilian possession. State Union and republic level ministries are responsible for military production, imports and exports, while the MUP at the republic level is responsible for regulating civilian possession of firearms.

Through SCG, Serbia is also committed to a number of international agreements on SALW control (as detailed in Table 16). These cover issues such as manufacturing, marking, export control, management of stockpiles, reduction of surpluses, destruction, information exchange, public awareness, transparency and record keeping. Responsibility for the implementation of international commitments lies with the individual member states. Serbia and Montenegro provides annual reports to the UN on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA).<sup>188</sup>

### 7.2.1 Licensing of exports and imports

Following a protracted period of review, in February 2005 the draft law on Foreign Trade in Weapons, Military Equipment and Dual-Use Goods was passed by the State Union Parliament and became law, replacing the 1996 Law on Production and Circulation of Armaments and Military Hardware. The new legislation draws on many areas of best practice and is in places harmonised with the provisions of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports.

Perhaps the most significant improvement in control measures is the transfer of licensing responsibility from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry for International Economic Relations, thereby enhancing non-military involvement in the decision making process.<sup>189</sup> The law also contains much improved provisions on end user certification and arms brokering, with the aim of reducing the possibility of diversion to unintended end users.

More effective legislation regulating imports and exports should be positive for SCG's defence industry. Enhanced control over transfers, reducing the likelihood that weapons will be diverted to unintended end users in violation of SCG's international commitments will help to provide a degree of legitimacy to an industry which has been badly damaged by previous scandals. In addition, the General Manager of Jugoimport SDPR suggested that the new legislation would improve the licensing process, stating that the new procedures would be 'stepped up and simplified [when compared to the previous legislation]'.<sup>190</sup>



Public Information flyers produced as part of the SALW Awareness Raising activity to support 'Operation Saber' in 2003

<sup>188</sup> SCG UNPoA Report, 2003.

<sup>189</sup> The new procedures for making licensing decisions had, in fact, been followed since 2002 when SCG's export laws were breached in the so-called Orao Affair. The formalisation of these procedures was, however, a vital guarantee.

<sup>190</sup> *Ekspres* 'Serbian director sees domestic military industry emerging from isolation' 08 July 2004.



The law contains the following key provisions:

- Weapons, military equipment and related technologies harmonised with the Common List of Military Equipment covered by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports; and dual-use goods, including software and technologies that may be used for both civilian and military purposes, harmonised with the List of Dual-Use Goods and Technologies of the EU.
- Export and import, transit, transshipment by all means across the territory of SCG regardless of final destination; Scientific and technical cooperation, production co-operation, acquisition and transfer of property rights for technologies; intellectual and material services that might be used for designing, developing, production, using and maintaining controlled goods.

While a clear step forward, there are still areas of ambiguity. Firstly, there is a potential conflict of interest, in that the MIER is now charged with issuing export licences, as well as being charged with promoting exports. Secondly, there is no provision for revoking a license in the event of a change in circumstances in a destination state. Therefore, if a license is issued and the security situation deteriorates before the export is realised, the government will have no basis under law to stop delivery.

Thirdly, while the activities of SCG brokers operating on behalf of SCG companies are legislated for in Articles 1,14 and 31, it is unclear whether third country brokering or extra-territorial brokering is covered. Therefore, if nationals operating in the country facilitate transfers of SALW when they are not sourced from, and do not transit, SCG territory, or, when an SCG national engages in brokering activity outside the country's territorial jurisdiction, it is unlikely that the law would regulate these transactions.

In Serbia, information about arms exports is not made public and no annual report exists, although as of February 2005 a new Committee of the SCG Parliament should be briefed on licensing decisions and export activities by the relevant ministries.

### **7.2.2 Licensing of Production**

Production of small arms and light weapons continues to be legislated under the 1996 Law on Production and Circulation of Armaments and Military Hardware. Article 8 of this law stipulates that producers acquire a licence for the production of armaments and military equipment, which is issued by the MoD. In order for this licence to be issued, any request must be accompanied by the relevant legal documents.

### **7.2.3 Customs legislation**

Most aspects of customs legislation as it relates to SALW are covered in the export control legislation. However, there are some further provisions covered by customs law that refer specifically to the way that the law is interpreted at point of entry and exit by those who are employed to enforce it.

Customs legislation applies to all those who cross, or wish to cross, Serbia's border either for personal or professional reasons with armaments or military goods. The legislation also covers unaccompanied consignments.

According to regulations, all weapons and ammunition must be reported at the border. Those that are found not to have been reported are confiscated. When transporting weapons across the border, an individual must accompany the consignment with full and up-to-date permits, as well as written invitations from shooting clubs or hunting associations if they are intending to use the weapons for sport. If explosive devices or materials are involved then a further permit is required from the Fire Department.

### **7.2.4 Legislation on domestic trade**

The primary legislation on the domestic trade in firearms is the Law on Testing, Marking and Labelling.<sup>191</sup> This is applicable to all companies that produce weapons, ammunition and military equipment and prohibits the trade

---

<sup>191</sup> Law on Testing, Marking and Labelling Firearms and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 46/95.

in firearms, ammunition, components and devices that have not been tested, marked and labelled. Labels and markings have to be visible and lasting and must indicate the name of the producer, the factory number, the type of weapon and year of production. Records of markings are held for ten years. If found to be trading in breach of this law, companies or individuals face fines ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 Dinars, and a ban on trading for a period of six months to three years can be applied.

The domestic trade is also covered by the Law on Weapons and Ammunition, which states that only authorised companies and vendors are permitted to trade with weapons, weapon components and ammunition.<sup>192</sup> Companies or other legal persons trading without authorisation are liable for a fine ranging between €400 and €2000.

## 7.2.5 Licensing of civilian weapons

The 1992 Law on Weapons and Ammunition<sup>193</sup> regulates civilian possession and is implemented by the Ministry of Interior through local and regional police stations. It covers a variety of different types of weapons such as those used for personal safety (pistols and revolvers), hunting weapons, sporting weapons, trophy arms, antique weapons and combined arms. The Law stipulates that it is forbidden to carry or buy weapons without a permit issued by the MUP. It also prohibits the use of weapons in public places or in areas where the safety of others may be endangered. Permits are not issued to minors, persons with a criminal record, those currently under criminal investigation guilty of various offences, or who have not passed the required tests for handling firearms. Permits to possess a firearm cost 1,350 Dinars and permits to carry a firearm cost 6,750 Dinars; the state raises approximately €9 million annually from licensing.<sup>194</sup> For all applications, background checks are conducted, and in cases where there is a justified suspicion that a person is not mentally capable of handling firearms, they must undergo a psycho-medical examination.

Companies, institutions and other legal entities, including security companies, those in charge of hunting grounds and shooting organisations, are permitted to acquire and possess weapons relevant to their work. Security companies can therefore own automatic and semi-automatic weapons, with the exception of automatic pistols. Companies carrying out physical protection or protection of private property (banks, industrial complexes etc) can entrust weapons to individuals, provided they are medically fit and trained for handling firearms, but only whilst they are performing their official duties. In exceptional and justified circumstances, individuals can submit a detailed request to the authorities for a five year permit to carry a weapon for personal security, provided they already have a standard weapons permit.<sup>195</sup>

To prevent unauthorised access to weapons and ammunition, they must be safely stored and when being transported for justifiable reasons, weapons must be unloaded and either disassembled or disabled. Permits are necessary for acquiring firearms and ammunition and these must be carried at all times when they are being transported. Relevant authorities are obliged to keep a record of all permits and licences issued, but it was not possible to verify whether this happened in practice. Penalties for contravening this law range from prison sentences lasting between six months to three years and fines in the range of 3,000 to 150,000 Dinars.

The application of the Law is in many cases not as strict as it could be. Police checks on the psychological background of licence applicants are often not particularly thorough, and according to sources, generally involve the police asking an applicant's neighbours whether they are 'mentally fit'.<sup>196</sup> It is difficult to imagine how the current process of assessing applications and issuing licences is either objective or standardised across the country. It is unlikely that the local police official who is responsible for judging a license application will have had the appropriate psychological training required to make an assessment of the mental health of the applicant, less so the need for the applicant to undergo a psychological assessment to determine their suitability to own a firearm. Other sources stated that because the application procedure remains largely paper-based, it slows

<sup>192</sup> Article 27, Law on Weapons and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/2003.

<sup>193</sup> Law on Weapons and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/2003.

<sup>194</sup> VIP News, 12 January 2005.

<sup>195</sup> Op cit Law on Weapons and Ammunition.

<sup>196</sup> Op cit Vasic.





the process and creates the potential for abuse.<sup>197</sup> It appears that the current criteria-based system requires significant elaboration and standardisation. For example, best practice suggests that licence applications should be judged on the basis of a range of factors including the suitability of the weapon for its intended use and capacity for safe storage as well as the mental health of the applicant and previous criminal convictions.<sup>198</sup>

### 7.2.6 Licensing of private security companies (PSCs)

Article 17 of the 1992 Law on Weapons and Ammunition is applicable to PSCs as it regulates companies, institutions and other legal persons who possess firearms for the purpose of ‘performing physical protection and objects protection.’ Key provisions included in Article 17 are as follows:

- Firearms holders are prohibited from carrying automatic pistols but may possess automatic and semi-automatic rifles.
- Firearms holders must be medically fit and trained in handling firearms.
- The individual rather than the company receives the permit and only those individuals responsible for the protection of persons or objects are permitted to carry weapons publicly.
- Firearms holders may only carry their weapons while performing their professional duties and so may not take their weapons home.
- Firearms holders must hand over their weapons and ammunition within fifteen days of the termination of their employment.
- Firearms holders may acquire ammunition ‘in quantities necessary for their work or activity.’

While the law states that firearms holders must be ‘medically fit and trained’ for handling weapons, sources told this survey “it would only cost a few Euros to get documents rubber stamped without an investigation”.<sup>199</sup> Another owner of a PSC told this survey that some - primarily smaller companies - had employees who were not registered and “who do not know how to use their firearm properly”,<sup>200</sup> indicating that it was possible to bypass the legislation.

There appears amongst respectable PSCs in Serbia to be a determination to subscribe to a higher level of self-regulation: a strong suggestion that the legal provisions and state regulation in place were insufficient to demand best practice from all companies operating in the industry. While there has been an increasing debate about the need for enhanced legislation, some observers have suggested that a possible reason for the lack of interest is associated with the fact that political parties are amongst those actively employing PSCs.<sup>201</sup>

### 7.2.7 Other SALW regulatory measures

Civilian possession is also regulated by other laws and regulations, such as the Law on Hunting<sup>202</sup> and the 1998 Rules on Closer Conditions Governing the Method of Storing and Safeguarding the Arms and Ammunition.<sup>203</sup> Rules are applicable to:

*“State and other bodies, companies, institutions, organisations or other legal entities which may be indirectly in charge of physical protection and protection of facilities, or may be involved in conducting activities involving the*

---

<sup>197</sup> Op cit Starcevic and Avram.

<sup>198</sup> For further information on regulation of civilian possession of SALW see ‘Regulation of Civilian Possession of SALW’, Briefing 16 Biting the Bullet, London, 2003.

<sup>199</sup> IWPR Interview with Slobodan Pejic, former Chief of Security, MUP, Belgrade, 11 March 2005.

<sup>200</sup> IWPR interview with Aleksander Hajdukovic, Managing Director, PSC ‘Gordon’, 15 March 2005.

<sup>201</sup> Op cit Maljkovic.

<sup>202</sup> Law on Hunting, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 39/93, 44/93, 60/93.

<sup>203</sup> Rules on Closer Conditions Governing the Method of Storing and Safeguarding the Arms and Ammunition 09 No. 011-13/98.

*usage of firearms, or special arms, the companies or retail stores dealing in the selling of arms, parts of arms and ammunition and companies and retail stores engaged in the repair and reconstruction of arms”.*<sup>204</sup>

They regulate the type of building and containers (safes, steel cabinets or boxes made of reinforced concrete with steel doors) where arms should be stored. The rules also state that when weapons are being transferred by either shooting teams or organisations that provide firearms training, that firearms must be unloaded, the ammunition carried separately and they must be supervised at all times by a professional instructor.

Sections in the Law on Hunting that are relevant to civilian possession include articles 46, 57 and 59. The first of these states that it is forbidden to hunt with military weapons or ammunition. Other articles state that in cases of an increased threat of illegal hunting, hunters associations can authorise security personnel and game wardens to carry arms, so long as they have the necessary permits and have passed a test to protect the hunting ground.



**A Regional workshop for NFP and SALW Control Project Managers, 2004**

### 7.3 Organisational capacity

The Republic of Serbia has a number of bodies that contribute to its capacity to control SALW. These include the police service, the border police, the Gendarmerie and customs that fall under the authority of the republic-level MUP.

The only State Union level body with involvement in security provision and small arms control is the SMAF. However, even here there is a *de facto* separation, whereby soldiers from one republic do not generally serve in the other. Despite the Union, the customs authorities are also located at the republic level and both customs and border police patrol the SCG border.

#### 7.3.1 The SCG National Focal Point (NFP) for SALW

A NFP has been appointed to facilitate the communication of intelligence and information across ministries involved in small arms control, which in Serbia are numerous. The NFP is also responsible for ensuring that government ministries and agencies actions are consistent with the SCG's commitments to the UNPoA, the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe Regional Implementation Plan and the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Based in the Ministry of Defence, the NFP liaises with the State Union level MIER, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Human Rights. At the republic level this process occurs between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy. There are not regular organised meetings between the ministries and, according to the NFP, these occur “when necessary”.<sup>205</sup> Best practice on national focal points from other parts of the world suggest that a more regular meeting routine aids effective coordination and communication.

---

<sup>204</sup> Ibid Article 2.



### 7.3.2 The Police Service

**Role and structure:** There are approximately 30,000 police officers in Serbia, although this survey was given several conflicting numbers from a variety of official sources. The need to dismantle the legacy of a “centralised police force; bureaucratic, dictatorial and operating from the top down”<sup>206</sup> remains real, and the reform process is seeking to address it. Restoring the police back to a community-based public service, under civilian control and upholding the rule of law is underway and improvements are tangible, as witnessed by the multi-ethnic police entity in southern Serbia.

**Resources:** The police service has shortages of basic equipment such as vehicles and handcuffs, while stations lack adequate custody facilities, audio/visual equipment and forensics.<sup>207</sup> This has, however, begun to improve with new equipment purchased with assistance from the U.S. and Dutch governments amongst others. The increased use of high calibre weapons in criminal activity<sup>208</sup> has prompted the police service to attempt to acquire higher calibre firearms in response.<sup>209</sup>

These basic shortages hinder routine policing; however, it is organised crime that poses a far more serious threat to community and state order, leading one source to state: “if it was just ordinary crime [that threatened this country], the police would do a very good job”.<sup>210</sup> Because organised crime is so well established and its beneficiaries so well insulated, an increase in resources is important for combating its effects. For example, a state-wide database of illicit gun confiscations would – a source told this survey – substantially increase the capacity of the police to deal with this threat.<sup>211</sup>

**Professionalism:** One tool that has been used to enhance professionalism is the April 2003 Police Code of Conduct, that stipulates how officers must behave before, during and after using a firearm.<sup>212</sup> The Code of Conduct states that when a police officer discharges a weapon it is then incumbent on that officer’s superior to assess the reasonableness of the use of force and then inform the Office of the Inspector General whether the incident falls within the applicable standards. Once a year, the data on the number of cases of both justified and unjustified use of force are collated and submitted by the Minister of Internal Affairs to the National Assembly. There is, however, a need to strengthen the laws surrounding firearms use and the draft Serbia Police Law should provide the basis for higher standards.<sup>213</sup> Enforcement of the Code of Conduct is impossible to measure but sources told this survey that improvements were noticeable, such as:

- In comparison to five years ago, police officers today are less likely to carry their professional weapon at home after their shift, thereby minimising the risk of incidents of improper use of firearms.<sup>214</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> Official Correspondence: Comments of the Ministry of Defence in response to the draft of the SALW Survey in Serbia, February 2005.

<sup>206</sup> Saferworld interview with Ian Campbell, Accountability Manager, Police Reform, OSCE Mission to SCG, Belgrade, 06 September 2004.

<sup>207</sup> Saferworld interviews with Lynne Bardell, Community Policing Advisor, Law Enforcement, Department, OSCE Mission to SCG; Campbell; and Starcevic and Avram.

<sup>208</sup> Kriminal net, Beta, Available at [www.orgkriminalorg.net](http://www.orgkriminalorg.net), Accessed on 17 March 2005.

<sup>209</sup> Conversation with Jugoimport SDPR official.

<sup>210</sup> Op cit Filipovic.

<sup>211</sup> Saferworld interview with Vladan Bonifacic, SCG Liaison Officer at the SECI Center for Combating Trans-border Crime, Bucharest, Romania, 03 September 2004.

<sup>212</sup> Prior to using a firearm, a police officer must give an oral warning that a firearm is about to be used. Further, a police officer must not use a firearm against a minor unless it is the only means of protecting himself from direct attack. As the situation currently stands, after discharging a weapon, a police officer must provide a written report to a senior official within 24 hours detailing what occurred and why a firearm was discharged.

<sup>213</sup> The Draft Police Law stipulates that an officer chooses the ‘minimum means of coercion that guarantees success’; that is to say a police officer should use a night stick rather than a handgun in a situation that does not threaten his or somebody else’s life. Resorting to the use of firearms must be the last choice for a police officer and only when: Protecting lives, including his/her own; Preventing the escape of somebody caught in the execution of a criminal act (which would carry a prison sentence of at least ten years); Preventing the escape of somebody from prison who has been prosecuted for an offence with at least a ten year sentence; or countering an attack on a person whom he/she is providing security protection.

<sup>214</sup> Saferworld interview with anonymous social worker, 09 September 2004.

- In comparison to five years ago, police officers today deal with cases of domestic violence in a more professional way and there are specialist officers trained to handle such situations.<sup>215</sup>
- Generally, the public's interaction with the police is more positive than five years ago.<sup>216</sup>

### 7.3.3 Gendarmerie

**Role and structure:** The Gendarmerie is Serbia's elite police force, performing special police tasks, including anti-riot activity, security for high-priority events and counter-terrorism. The force is under the authority of the Ministry of Interior.<sup>217</sup> It was formed in September 2001 in response to the need for Serbia to counter serious state threats such as armed insurgency. The Gendarmerie comprises four battalions, each of which is about 500 strong and is capable of holding self-sustaining positions<sup>218</sup> for protracted periods of time. The force has its own intelligence section.

The emphasis of the Gendarmerie's work is in southern Serbia where they have been carrying out anti-terrorism operations from a base outside Vranje. However, the force is nationally deployable and in March 2003, Serbian Minister of Interior Dragan Jovic confirmed that the force was guarding potential targets of attack such as the Albanian Embassy and international organisations' headquarters in Belgrade.

**Resources:** According to *Jane's Intelligence Review* the force has the capability of carrying out offensive patrols in formation of eight to twelve troops armed with 7.9mm and 12.7mm sniper rifles and night vision equipment.<sup>219</sup> They also have the use of 30mm grenade launchers, Hummer vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, anti-tank missiles and various forms of artillery.<sup>220</sup>

**Professionalism:** Each member of the Gendarmerie receives four months military training. According to informed sources, they are "very well trained and very well disciplined."<sup>221</sup> This would seem to be supported by its widely-praised restraint following the March 2004 violence in Kosovo.

In November 2004, the head of the MUP's Public Security Department Major General Miroslav Milosevic announced the creation of a new Anti-Terrorist Unit within the MUP but autonomous from the Gendarmerie. The unit, Major Milosevic said, would draw its personnel from the best members of the Gendarmerie as well as the MUP's Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (SAJ).<sup>222</sup>

### 7.3.4 Border police and customs

**Role and structure:** As of 05 February 2005, Serbia's 8,000 border police became responsible for the security of all state borders, including the administrative border with Kosovo. The border police assumed these responsibilities from the army and Gendarmerie bringing Serbia in line with European standards.

The customs agency is responsible for controlling the import and export of goods into and out of the country and ensuring that transportation is consistent with legislation on arms imports and exports. Personnel are deployed at 65 official crossings around the country's external borders as well as at international airports in Belgrade and Nis and along the crossings between Serbia and Montenegro.

---

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Op cit SMMRI (a).

<sup>217</sup> Op cit Watkins.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Op cit Moore-Bick.

<sup>222</sup> *VIP News*, 06 Jan 2005.



Besides border searches for illegal weapons (increasingly based on intelligence-led sources), the border police and particularly customs are responsible for authenticating legal transfers of arms, which involves searching a consignment and checking it against the relevant sets of paperwork.

Procedurally, border police identified problems with the passage of information from different departments, problems with communication and a need for an integrated information system where police on both sides of a given border can simultaneously access the same information.<sup>223</sup>

There is a legal provision that gives customs officials the authority to patrol the interior of the country, to stop any vehicle or person anywhere and ask questions. Officials also have the legal right to enter any company building or storage space to inspect and/or confiscate goods and documents.<sup>224</sup>

**Resources:** According to the Republic of Serbia Regulations for Conditions and Methods of Carrying Weapons and Ammunition by Authorised Customs Officials (2003), officials may carry 9mm PARA pistols and in special circumstances 7.62mm assault rifles.<sup>225</sup> Sources told this survey that there was a lack of equipment and facilities, ranging from inspection areas and offices to IT equipment and sniffer dogs.<sup>226</sup>

Progress in upgrading Serbia's official border crossings is noticeable as evidenced by the 'state-of-the-art' Horgosh crossing with Hungary;<sup>227</sup> the most modern border crossing in Serbia. Other improvements include the inauguration of a new 24-hour hotline for anonymous reporting of violations.

International donors are assisting the border authorities in a number of areas. For instance, the US State Department, through its Export Control and Border Security programme, is supplying the customs authorities with software that allows it to integrate relevant information on individuals (biographical details, health records, criminal records, etc) into a central database that can be used to determine the risk a particular individual poses at the point of entry.

**Professionalism:** Firearms training for police and customs officials was widely reported to be "well structured and well controlled"<sup>228</sup> with officials in both services required to fulfil a mandatory firearms training. The regulations for customs officials authorised to carry weapons and ammunition state that officers are personally liable for their firearm. Authorised officers may carry their weapons when conducting anti-smuggling operations, customs investigations, intelligence activities and passenger and vehicle control at crossing points as well as facilities and goods protection. Every authorised officer must possess a certificate of training that he/she is competent to use a firearm, which is issued by the MUP. Comprehensive regulation is important. Equally important, however, is effective implementation and enforcement. In this area this is difficult to assess, as at the time of writing only anecdotal information was available.

### 7.3.5 Intelligence services

**Role and structure:** The MoD, MFA and Gendarmerie have their own intelligence services. The MoD's Military Security Agency (VBA) is authorised for "detection, surveillance, documenting and stopping hostile activities of foreign intelligence and counterintelligence services". Additionally, "detection and prevention of internal and international terrorism, illegal trafficking of dangerous materials, smuggling of arms and military equipment are also within the range of the reformed security agency's activities."<sup>229</sup>

By far the most significant agency is the BIA, which operates outside any ministry, and in accordance with the Law on the Security Information Agency (2002) is accountable directly to the government of Serbia and the

---

<sup>223</sup> SMMRI (b), 2004.

<sup>224</sup> Op cit Stickney.

<sup>225</sup> Op cit Raketic.

<sup>226</sup> Sunter (a), 2004.

<sup>227</sup> Op cit Zlokas.

<sup>228</sup> Op cit Campbell.

<sup>229</sup> *Danas*, 27/28 December 2004.

Republic of Serbia Parliament. The agency is the successor of the heavily criticised State Security Service, which was formerly part of the MUP. Its creation was an important step in developing the capacity of the state to tackle both organised crime and corruption as its new structure means it is less likely to be used as an instrument for “spying on political opponents”<sup>230</sup> and more capable of tackling organised crime. The BIA is resolved to providing actionable intelligence to the agencies of the MUP and other intelligence and security agencies.

Some observers have judged that the current intelligence apparatus is incapable of dealing with the long-established family based networks involved in much of the trafficking that takes place in and around Serbia.<sup>231</sup> Other sources commented that the services were competent at tackling these networks and cooperated well with law enforcement agencies.<sup>232</sup> There is some evidence of such cooperation, particularly between the BIA and MUP.<sup>233</sup>

**Resources:** Nothing is known of the intelligence services resources although the BIA website reports that its agents carry firearms. No statistics on levels of personnel are available.

### 7.3.6 The Serbian and Montenegrin Armed Forces (SMAF)

**Role and structure:** The SMAF is a State Union level entity. Article 11 of the Constitutional Charter stipulates that it is headed by the Supreme Defence Council (VSO), which comprises the two presidents of the member states. The Supreme Defence Council takes decisions by consensus. The SMAF General Staff is subordinated to the Ministry of Defence.

Soldiers (conscripted or professional) normally serve in the republic in which they reside. There are continuing and difficult problems involving the navy, which is based almost entirely on the Adriatic coast in Montenegro, although there is also a unit on the River Danube.<sup>234</sup>

The armed forces play an important role in preventing the proliferation of SALW. First and foremost they are responsible for controlling the SALW that they already possess and publicly demonstrating responsible and professional use of firearms. The armed forces have also played a role in collecting firearms during previous amnesties.

**Resources:** The resources of the armed services are covered in Section 4.5.2

### 7.3.7 Inter-agency & inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination

As the law enforcement and intelligence capabilities of Serbia are spread across a variety of agencies and ministries, it is vital that these bodies are properly co-ordinated and that they have effective communication structures.

Cooperation between the MUP and the MoD intelligence services has historically been a problem with the two competing with each other.<sup>235</sup> To address this, the Joint Forces Command was established to enhance cooperation between the security services. According to Jane’s Intelligence Review there is “less animosity now between the military and police formations”;<sup>236</sup> However other informed sources spoke of enduring problems “not conducive to security work”.<sup>237</sup> Specific examples of co-operation between the intelligence services were available from the

<sup>230</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>231</sup> Op cit Watkins.

<sup>232</sup> Op cit Campbell.

<sup>233</sup> Such as the 26 October 2003 joint BIA-Gendarmerie-MUP action that uncovered weapons between Veliki Trnovac and Breznica.

<sup>234</sup> Op cit Jugointport SDPR.

<sup>235</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>236</sup> Op cit Watkins.

<sup>237</sup> Op cit. Prelevic.





Serbian Government, such as the April and July 2004 operations in which the BIA and the police worked together to jointly seize large quantities of weapons and drugs.<sup>238</sup>

Levels of cooperation between agencies are – according to key informant sources – improving<sup>239</sup> and are particularly good between the MUP, the taxation department, and the MIER. Co-operation between different departments within the MUP was also said to be good, although this was not possible to verify.<sup>240</sup> Semi-structured interviews with border guards revealed similar findings: that they were satisfied with their co-operation with the government regarding fighting gun trafficking. An example of good cooperation that was offered included intelligence on planned smuggling operations being shared in a timely manner, but other border police suggested that a more proactive approach to intelligence gathering and sharing would bring increased results.

### 7.3.8 Judicial capacity

The judiciary is recovering from a decade in which political influence and corruption permeated the system, seriously undermining the rule of law in Serbia. In the words of one district judge, the “judiciary is a hostage of the executive”.<sup>241</sup> This situation came to the fore in 2001 when then Justice Minister Vladan Batic called for the dismissal of 58 judges for a range of corruption-related charges - a move, he said, that marked the “beginning of the process”.<sup>242</sup>

Since then, the entire judicial process has been the subject of far-reaching reforms in an attempt to restore public trust and enhance efficiency and the capacity to uphold the law. Progress has been made through changes to the penal code; a new legal framework for enhancing judicial independence;<sup>243</sup> the removal of officials found in breach of their contracts; the introduction, in September 2004, of more objective criteria for the appointment of new judges;<sup>244</sup> the doubling of salaries for judges engaged in organised crime related trials;<sup>245</sup> and in 2003, the establishment of the Belgrade Special Court, designed to try those accused of serious acts such as organised crime, assassination and terrorism.

Respondents told this survey that a lack of faith in the legal and judicial system held people back from testifying against criminals.<sup>246</sup> This could be alleviated by the introduction of witness protection in high-profile cases. Other sources criticised the time it took for legal proceedings to start and conclude, which can act as a deterrent to accessing the legal system.. This situation could be ameliorated by the introduction of plea-bargaining that would give prosecutors the ability to try more cases more quickly.<sup>247</sup>

Relating specifically to SALW issues, key informants suggested that there is a need for developing explicit sentencing guidelines as many judges have interpreted firearms offences, especially domestic ones, in a lenient manner by imposing non-custodial sentences on those found to be breaking the law.<sup>248</sup> Sources suggested that lenient sentences were sometimes given to those defendants caught carrying firearms without a licence, in cases where the accused has no previous criminal record and when there was no obvious victim.<sup>249</sup> Although

<sup>238</sup> Serbia Government website, <http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/vest.php?id=4007&q=BIA>, 23 July 2004 and <http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/vest.php?id=683&q=BIA>, accessed 2 April 2004.

<sup>239</sup> Op cit Zlokas.

<sup>240</sup> Op cit SMMRI (b).

<sup>241</sup> Vida Petrovic Skero, lawyer, quoted in Stanimirovic, 2002.

<sup>242</sup> B92 Vesti, [www.b92.net](http://www.b92.net), accessed 10 March 2005.

<sup>243</sup> Correspondence from Ministry of Justice, February 2005.

<sup>244</sup> On 18 September 2004, Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica outlined new criteria for appointing judges.

<sup>245</sup> B92, Vesti, [http://www.b92.net/english/news/index.php?nav\\_id=21518&dd=18&mm=02&yyyy=2003](http://www.b92.net/english/news/index.php?nav_id=21518&dd=18&mm=02&yyyy=2003), accessed on 16 March 2005

<sup>246</sup> Anonymous, in relation to a case of a man murdered in Belgrade witnessed by several people in 2003 nobody has so far been arrested or taken to trial.

<sup>247</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>248</sup> Op cit Barovic.

<sup>249</sup> Saferworld interview with Dejan Anastasijevic, Journalist, Vreme, Belgrade, 09 September 2004.





Article 33 of the Penal Code specifies that illegal ownership can be punished with between three and five years imprisonment, there are no mandatory minimums. There is some evidence that this situation is changing.<sup>250</sup> According to a legal source, if somebody is in court for illegal possession of an automatic weapon they will now “almost definitely” go to prison.<sup>251</sup>

## 7.4 Challenges to increased capacity of state infrastructure

Levels of professionalism are hard to measure; however, in Serbia there are two primary challenges to the levels of professionalism within the state apparatus:

**Politicisation:** The enduring influence of political affiliation has a serious and detrimental effect on the capacity of state agencies. According to numerous sources, the extent of the problem has not diminished over recent years and exists at all levels.<sup>252</sup> Recent high profile examples include the removal, in August 2004, of the then Chief of the Gendarmerie, a move that “completed a purge of police and security chiefs by the current political leaders, which affected the secret police, Internal Security and the Intelligence Agency.”<sup>253</sup> Other sources confirm there is a significant problem with political interference in police work.<sup>254</sup> According to a former Minister of Internal Affairs, the Ministry refused to accept a law on local police because it would have effectively given power to political parties at the local level.<sup>255</sup> Article 124 of the draft Police Law should, when implemented, prohibit officers from being members of political parties. Sources informed the survey that the army remained a rigid top-down system where “senior people take all the decisions”<sup>256</sup> and where there continues to be a reliance on party mechanisms.<sup>257</sup> The continuing lack of a professional civil service, free from political influence, remains an impediment to change.

**Corruption:** The effect corruption has on the state’s capacity to implement the rule of law is without doubt significant. Opportunistic corruption such as stealing fines undermines professionalism and is overtly criminal in nature, but higher-level organised corruption more seriously impacts morale and can, if left unchecked, further undermine the legitimacy of the police and other state institutions. A major cause of corruption is the poor salaries received by many; for example, in the police service salaries start at €160 per month. The Deputy Minister of the Interior, has identified strengthening internal controls and instigating structural change as key for combating corruption.<sup>258</sup> There is a growing willingness to tackle institutional corruption where it undermines the capacity of the state. For example, in the first half of 2004, judges in Zrenjanin and Nis were suspended and detained for alleged corruption as a result of an investigation by the intelligence services.

## 7.5 Stockpile management

Sources consulted for this survey felt that arms control both within the army and the MUP agencies ‘is very good’<sup>259</sup> with weapons closely monitored by responsible staff.<sup>260</sup> Only one source described instances of soldiers taking weapons from barracks while army representatives strongly denied that this occurred (MUP officials were not available for comment).

---

<sup>250</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>253</sup> Sunter (b), 2004.

<sup>254</sup> Op cit Prelevic.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Op cit Holland.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Dusan Mihajhlovic, Minister of Interior, quoted in *OSCE Police Reform Newsletter*, July 2003.

<sup>259</sup> Op cit Moore-Bick.

<sup>260</sup> Op cit SCG UN PoA Report.



**MoD storage and safety:** As an independent verification of storage facilities was not possible, the survey relied instead on statements made by the MoD, reports submitted by SCG on implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA), by former military personnel familiar with storage standards and by selected media reports.

According to the MoD, all weapons and ammunition possessed by the SMAF are kept in standard stores and facilities that are used exclusively for this purpose. Quantities of weapons and ammunition possessed are accounted for by the unit charged with their storage and three copies of these written records are stored in three separate locations. According to Serbia's report on implementation of the UN PoA, once stockpiles are identified as surplus, they are treated as marketable goods or earmarked for destruction depending on their condition, technical performance and use.<sup>261</sup> The same report described storage facilities as generally very good with every facility having a sentry, being sealed and specially secured with padlocks, locks, electric light, and wire.<sup>262</sup> Further security measures include fire and lightning protection and anti-explosion systems. Safety procedures include facility risk levels being periodically reviewed and a plan of emergency measures and procedures in place at every facility.<sup>263</sup>

Thefts from barracks are difficult to estimate unless firearms can be clearly identified as MoD stock. Almost all key informants told this survey that such thefts did not occur on an appreciable level, a belief that was confirmed by the MoD.<sup>264</sup>

**Incidents at MOD Facilities:** It is necessary to draw primarily on media reports to identify cases of incidents involving MoD controlled firearms. Most incidents seem to have occurred during the 1990s when safety levels were reduced as a result of the disintegration of SFRJ. Notable incidents during this time included an explosion at a storage depot in 1993 and a truck explosion in Bogovadja two years previously. More recently the Head of the Military Police Department of the General Staff told the state-owned Tanjug news agency on 21 January 2005 that as part of the army security system review, there were 1,217 'extraordinary'<sup>265</sup> events in 2004 including 34 military and 3 civilian deaths.<sup>266</sup> Although no further official information about the nature of these incidents was available, media reports provide an insight into some of these cases. The most high profile incident, in which two soldiers died as a result of small arms fire at the Topcider barracks near Belgrade on 5 October 2004 prompted the Supreme Defence Council to launch an investigation into the circumstances of the soldiers deaths. At the time of writing, the findings were not yet public. Such investigations appear to be positive signs of increased transparency within the MoD.

**MUP storage and safety:** MUP stockpiles are classified in different categories to distinguish between SALW confiscated at borders, seizures from criminal groups and individuals, and un-destroyed stocks remaining from the weapons amnesty in 2003.<sup>267</sup> The police keep the weapons that have been confiscated or surrendered in police stations, or more secure MUP facilities, after checking the weapon's markings.<sup>268</sup> According to the 2003 report on the implementation of the UNPoA, these sites are 'customised facilities' where the standards and responsibilities for safe storage are 'very high'. The MUP has strict rules for servicing, storage and use of its own firearms but is limited by resource scarcity, and key informants have reported that storage conditions at local police stations are a cause for concern.<sup>269</sup>

**Incidents at MUP Facilities:** The 2003 PoA Report notes that there have been no incidents of theft or other security incidents.<sup>270</sup> No other information was available.

---

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Official Correspondence: Comments from the Ministry of Defence to the draft Serbia SALW Survey (February 2005).

<sup>265</sup> An 'extraordinary event' is classified as an incident with consequences to personnel or equipment of a 'great value'.

<sup>266</sup> VIP News Service, Issue 122, 03 February 2005.

<sup>267</sup> Op cit Zlokas.

<sup>268</sup> Op cit Hirst and Mariaini.

<sup>269</sup> OP cit Vasic.

<sup>270</sup> Op cit Hirst and Mariani.

**Transportation:** Weapons are transported by either MUP or MoD staff in trucks. Depending on the distance of the delivery, this may or may not involve a convoy. The general rule is that the truck will be unaccompanied if the delivery is less than 100 km. If explosive devices or materials are involved then a permit is required from the Fire Department, and usually a special MUP escort will be provided. For legal shipments of SALW, an MUP escort is organised at the discretion of the police if it is a large quantity of weapons (or explosives) and the transporters cannot offer satisfactory levels of security.

## 7.6 Amnesty and collection capacity

Serbia has had three weapons amnesties and collections since 1999 (2001, 2002 and 2003). The first two of these were traditional amnesties that together collected 10,000–15,000 firearms (no exact figures are available).<sup>271</sup> The third amnesty was very different because it coincided with the state of emergency following Prime Minister Djindjic's assassination and included forced confiscations and security service raids conducted during a period of social unrest and increased political instability. The household survey revealed that as a result of the timing of this last amnesty, respondents confused the amnesty with the state of emergency. During this period, 2,046 weapons, 33,478 rounds of ammunition and 198.5 kg of explosives were confiscated by law enforcement officers and security services. A subsequent voluntary amnesty between 24 March and 20 April 2003 resulted in 47,853 weapons and 2,226,765 pieces of ammunition being surrendered to MUP authorities for collection and legalisation. The relatively high numbers of weapons collected or legalised during this period is indicative of a) the large number of unregistered weapons in civilian possession at the time; b) the increased propensity of the population to legalise or surrender weapons during 'critical' times.

The household survey and key informant interviews revealed that the military is viewed as far more capable than the police of collecting weapons from the public as they have "historically been better trusted".<sup>272</sup> Other sources confirmed the opinion that the capacity of the state to encourage collection or legalisation remained limited because the "state still cannot provide adequate security",<sup>273</sup> and weapons amnesties need to be supported by effective public awareness campaigns if they are to succeed.<sup>274</sup>

### 7.6.1 Destruction (SALW and ammunition)

The state's capacity for arms destruction appears to be good and its record demonstrates this. According to MoD statistics, since 1991 more than 100,000 weapons, over two million rounds of ammunition and around 1,200 Man Portable Air Defence systems (MANPADs) have been destroyed at state-controlled facilities in Cacak, Uzice and Smederevo. Since 2001 international donors such as the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), SEESAC and the Dutch and US Embassies have financed the following destructions:

Implementer	Description	Quantity	Date	Location	Sponsor
SCG MoD	Firearms	52,000	2001	Cacak	US Dept. of State
SCG MoD	Firearms and military-spec equipment	27,723	2003	Cacak	NAMSA
Serbia MUP	SALW Ammunition	0.8t	2003	Uzice	SEESAC
Serbia MUP	Amnesty collected firearms	7,335	2003	Smederevo	SEESAC
Serbia MOI	Confiscated firearms	3,859	2003	Smederevo	SEESAC
Serbia MOI	Amnesty collected firearms	10,000	2004	Smederevo	US Dept. of State

**Table 17: Controlled destruction of SALW and ammunition between 2001–2004<sup>275</sup>**

<sup>271</sup> Op cit Raketic.

<sup>272</sup> Op cit Timotic.

<sup>273</sup> Op cit Djumic.

<sup>274</sup> Op cit Anastasijevic.

<sup>275</sup> SEESAC Database, [www.seesac.org](http://www.seesac.org).



Despite impressive figures of SALW destruction, the pace of destruction slowed in 2004 and 2005 (as Table 17 demonstrates). There remain 20,000 firearms and explosives (principally grenades and landmines) awaiting destruction as a result - according to the MFA - of a shortfall in resources. Interviews with key informants suggest that funds and technical assistance is available if requested.

## 7.7 Capacity of civil society and non-governmental organisations

Civil society groups play a constructive role in supporting government action to enhance security and democracy. There are a number of NGOs in Serbia dealing directly with military-security issues; these include the Atlantic Council of Serbia, the Defence and Security Studies Centre, the Centre for Civil-Military Relations and the Red Cross of Serbia. Other more grassroots organisations such as Balkan Youth Union (BYU) support civic activism and are invaluable in galvanising public support for government initiatives, as well as complimenting governmental action on small arms issues.

The media can play an important role in increasing transparency and knowledge of security and SALW issues. Serbia has a large range of print and broadcast media that report security and SALW issues. Some commentators, however, have suggested that the number of journalists who have experience in these fields is limited and reporting might, at times, be detrimental to improving understanding between the public and state actors.



**'Celebrate without Weapons' in Belgrade 2004**

Although there is a lot of data that was not made available to this survey by the government, there appears to be an effort to increase the level of publicly available information; and some of the information in this survey has been sourced from English and Serbian language government websites – unthinkable three years ago. Part of the reason for the limited amount of official information in the public domain is the limited number of journalists and NGOs focusing on small arms issues. This reduces the opportunities to generate effective pressure that leads to greater transparency and accountability.

## Annex 1 - Household Survey Sample

Sample		Count (N)	Row %
Total		1641	100.0
Gender	Male	787	48.0
	Female	854	52.0
Age Groups	18 – 29	333	20.3
	30 – 39	262	16.0
	40 – 49	314	19.1
	50 – 64	382	23.3
	65+	351	21.4
Nationality	Serbian	1414	87.2
	Other	207	12.8
Financial Situation	Poor	689	42.0
	Average	798	48.6
	Affluent	130	07.9
	Refuse to say	24	01.5
Work	Professionals	103	06.3
	Administrative personnel	206	12.6
	Workers	375	22.9
	Pensioners	430	26.2
	Other not working	527	32.1
Stratum	Vojvodina	443	27.0
	Belgrade	351	21.4
	West Serbia	181	17.3
	Central Serbia	283	13.9
	East	153	11.1
	South east	229	09.4
Type of Settlement	Large city	339	11.5
	City	189	22.4
	Town	368	20.7
	Rural Region or village	744	45.4







## Annex 2 - Focus Group Sample

	City	Type of settlement	Gender	Age
Group 1	Vranje	Semi-urban; rural	4M + 4F	18-22
Group 2		Urban	4M + 4F	28-55
Group 3		Semi-urban; rural	8F	28-55
Group 4		Semi-urban; rural	8M	28-55
Group 5	Subotica	Semi-urban; rural	4M + 4F	18-22
Group 6		Urban	4M + 4F	28-55
Group 7		Semi-urban; rural	8F	28-55
Group 8		Semi-urban; rural	8M	28-55
Group 9	Belgrade	Urban	4M + 4F	16-18
Group 10		Urban	4M + 4F	28-55
Group 11		Semi-urban; rural	4M + 4F	28-55
Group 12		Semi-urban; rural Hooligans/football fans	8M	16-30



## Bibliography

- American Association of Suicidology, 'USA suicide: 2002 official final data' [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org), 2004
- BBC Monitoring International Reports, 'Serbia-Montenegro Defence Ministry chronicles contentious arms sales to Nigeria', 09 May 2003 <http://www.nisat.org/west%20africa/news%20from%20the%20region/MAIN%20NEWS%20PAGE/nigeria/2003-05-09%20SERBIA-MONTENEGRO%20DEFENCE%20MINISTRY%20CHRONICLES%20CONTENTIOUS%20ARMS%20SALES%20TO%20NIGERIA%20.html>
- B92, 'Sorting the criminals from the police', 27 October 2004
- Balkan Youth Union (BYU) 'Small arms problems in Belgrade – a survey of young people's attitudes' (SEESAC, 2003)
- Barnett N, 'Prvoslav Davinic – Defence Minister Serbia and Montenegro' *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 15 September 2004
- Blic, 'U Novom Pazaru zaplenjeno 1400 metaka', 10 October 2004
- Block R, *Firearms in Canada and eight other western countries: selected findings of the 1996 International Crime (Victim) Survey*, (Canadian Department of Justice, 1997)
- Briza J and Matic T, 'Vojvodina hit by wave of ethnic attacks', *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No 502, 2004
- Chamber of Commerce, Belgrade, 'Privredna Komora Srbije', 2004
- Copic S, 'Wife abuse in the countries of the former Yugoslavia', *Feminist Review* No 76, 2004
- Danas 'Dobra vest za kragujevačke oružare', 20 October 2004 <http://www.danas.co.yu/20041020/ekonomija1.html>
- Davis I *Small arms and light weapons in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: the nature of the problem*, (Saferworld, 2002)
- Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, *Occasional paper number 5: The Western Balkans in transition*, (European Commission, 2004)
- East-West Institute, *Cross-border trafficking in South Eastern Europe* (SEESAC, 2003)
- *Ekspres Newspaper* 'Serbian director sees domestic military industry emerging from isolation', 08 July 2004
- Government of the Republic of Serbia, 'Poverty reduction strategy paper for Serbia', *International Monetary Fund Country Report* 04/120, 2004
- Hirst C and Mariani B, *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor*, (SEESAC, 2004)
- International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Serbia's changing political landscape' *Europe Briefing*, 22 July 2004
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2004 – 2005*, (Oxford University Press and IISS, 2004)
- Jugoimport SPDR Report, 17 June 2004
- Killias M, van Kesteren J, Rindlisbacher M, 'Guns, violent crime and suicide in 21 countries', *Canadian Journal of Criminology* Volume 43 (4), 2001
- Law on Hunting, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 39/93, 44/93, 60/93
- Law on Testing, Marking and Labelling Firearms and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 46/95
- Law on Weapons and Ammunition, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/2003
- Marten Board International, 'Social Barometer', 2004
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (a) *Activity Report 2002* <http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/mup.nsf/index1-e.html>



- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (b) *Weapons Registration Official Statistics*, 31 December 2003
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (c) *Activity Report 2003* [http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/skzn.nsf/fc9e82a3073a74fac1256c3200393d62/\\$FILE/izvestaj2003.pdf](http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/skzn.nsf/fc9e82a3073a74fac1256c3200393d62/$FILE/izvestaj2003.pdf)
- MUP 'Pregled osnovnih pokazatelja o stanju javne bezbednosti' 'Basic Indicators of the State of Public Security' ://www.mup.sr.gov.yu/domino/preventi.nsf/statistikakriminalitet
- Nikolic-Ristanovic V; Copic S; Milivojevic S; Simeunovic-Patic, B, and Mihic, B, *Trafficking in people in Serbia* (Victimology Society in Serbia and OSCE, 2004)
- Nikolic-Soloman D, 'Serbia and Montenegro: an unhappy marriage' *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No 493, 2004
- OSCE *Police Reform Newsletter* July 2003
- Peric-Zimonovic V, 'Private eyes watch over market', Inter Press Service News Agency, 26 August 2004
- *Politika* 'Scorpions for Serbia 07 April 2004
- Republic of Serbia Statistical Office 'Final results of the Census 2002' Communication Number 295, Issue LII, 24 December 2004 <http://www.statserb.sr.gov.yu/zip/esn31.pdf>
- Rules on Closer Conditions Governing the Method of Storing and Safeguarding the Arms and Ammunition 09 No 011-13/98
- Serbian Government website 'Problems in Kragujevac arms factory to be tackled' <http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu/vesti/vest.php?id=2181&q> 15 May 2004
- SEESAC 'Public perceptions of small arms and security in south Serbia' (SEESAC, 2004)
- Simpson J, (a), 'Serbia: pulling in western funds', *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No 505, 2004
- Simpson J, (b), 'Private Security in Serbia: Industry growth is offset by poor legislation, creating a dangerous vacuum' unpublished, 2005
- Small Arms Survey (a) 'A house isn't a home without a gun': *SALW Survey Republic of Montenegro*, (SEESAC, 2004)
- Small Arms Survey (b) *Kosovo and the gun: a baseline assessment of small arms and light weapons in Kosovo*, (UNDP and SAS, 2004)
- Smith A, 'Baltics fighting suicide crisis' <http://europe.tiscali.co.uk/index.jsp?section=lifestyle&level=previe w&content=222014>, 27 July 2004
- Stanimirovic S, 'Serbia: reforms alarm judiciary' *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No 309, 2002
- State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, 'Report of Serbia and Montenegro on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade and in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects' 2003 ([http://www.undp.org.yu/files/other/SACISCG\\_SerbiaandMontenegro.pdf](http://www.undp.org.yu/files/other/SACISCG_SerbiaandMontenegro.pdf))
- Statistical Office of Kosovo, 'Kosovo in Figures 2004', [http://www.sok-kosovo.org/pdf/general/Kosovo\\_in\\_figures\\_2004.pdf](http://www.sok-kosovo.org/pdf/general/Kosovo_in_figures_2004.pdf)
- Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) (a) 'Serbia SALW Household Survey report', (SMMRI (unpublished), 2004)
- SMMRI (b) 'Serbia SALW Survey: Semi-structured interview report' (SMMRI (unpublished), 2004)
- Sunter D, (a) 'Europe's leaky "outer frontier"' *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No 514, 2004
- Sunter D, (b) 'Serbia: police chief sacking seen as "purge"' *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report* No 512, 2004
- United Nations, *UN International Study on Firearm Regulation*, (United Nations, 1998)
- *Vreme* 'PM Davinic on destiny of military industry', 17 September 2004
- Watkins A, 'Terrorists and traffickers test the patience of Serb border forces', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 07 September 2004



---

Every minute of every day one person throughout the world is killed by armed violence. But it is not just the victims and their families who are affected. Communities need security to develop and prosper; insecurity can lock them into a cycle of poverty.

Saferworld is an independent, non-governmental organisation that is working to prevent armed violence and create safer communities. Of course, preventing violent conflict is no easy task. Many of the issues are complex, there is rarely a 'quick fix' and each situation has a unique set of problems. So a comprehensive approach to identify and tackle all aspects of the problem is crucial. This is why Saferworld works with those involved at every level: international bodies, governments and non-government organisations - including local organisations whose knowledge is vital to complement our own research and experience.

---

*For further information contact:*

**Saferworld  
The Grayston Centre  
28 Charles Square, London N1 6HT  
England**

Tel: (+44) (020) 7324 46 46  
Fax: (+44) (020) 7324 46 47  
Web: [www.saferworld.org.uk](http://www.saferworld.org.uk)